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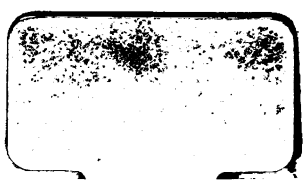

F. C. Smith
Sutton.
1916.

Naval -

SIR MICHAEL SEYMOUR

Yours truly & affec.
Jno. Duncan
friend

SIR

MEMOIR

OF

REAR-ADMIRAL

SIR MICHAEL SEYMOUR, BART., K.C.B.

NOT PUBLISHED

Printed by
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PREFACE.

THIS MEMOIR was begun soon after the death of SIR MICHAEL SEYMOUR, but, for reasons which it is not necessary to detail here, was not completed at that time.

So long a period has since elapsed, and so many of those who knew him personally, or who had watched his career with interest and admiration, have passed away, that it is thought now to be undesirable to publish it. But respect for his personal character, and the interest which a narrative of the exploits of an officer distinguished in the great war of the early part of the century always excites, have made the surviving members of his family wish to preserve some record of the life of one in whom were united, to a remarkable degree, so many of the great qualities of a commander with so much of the gentleness and affection that endears a man to his family. This Memoir is therefore now printed for private circulation.

RICHARD SEYMOUR.

THE COLLEGE, WORCESTER :
January 1878.

MEMOIR.

THE subject of this Memoir was born on November 8, 1768, at the Glebe House, at Pallas, in the county of Limerick. His parents were the descendants of families long known and distinguished in British history, his father, the Rev. John Seymour, being a descendant of one of the family of the Protector Somerset, who had settled in Ireland, William, the father of John Seymour, having been Mayor and Sheriff of Limerick; and his mother was descended from the family of Hobart, the head of which holds the title of Earl of Buckinghamshire. In a letter of hers to her son, she says, 'I can remember that my grandfather Hobart, being bred at court, gave my father such an high opinion of the English, that he hated Ireland, and always wanted to persuade us that we were not Irish; that the first of the name of Hobart came over Equerry to King William; that the family could be traced back to the reign of Henry II.; and he showed us an old book from Wiltshire, where there were three baronets, Sir William, Sir Miles, and Sir John Hobart.' But although

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his parents could thus boast of noble ancestry, they had virtues which rendered them more dear and venerable in his sight than anything arising from the mere accident of birth. His father, being intended for holy orders, was sent at the proper age to Trinity College, Dublin; during his residence at that university, he displayed that regularity of conduct, amiability of demeanour, and strong good sense, which so singularly marked his character in after life. His grandchildren, while members of the University of Oxford, were more than once reminded, that their grandfather was never known, during his four years at college, to miss morning chapel, and they were affectionately urged, in this as well as in other ways, to emulate his excellence. He had not been long admitted to holy orders, when his talents and many amiable qualities attracted the attention of Dr. Cox, then Archbishop of Cashel, who appointed him one of his domestic chaplains. The Archbishop, who was as zealous to reward as he was capable of appreciating superior merit, soon afterwards offered him a valuable living; but, with singular disinterestedness and self-denial, he respectfully but firmly refused to accept preferment, until those chaplains who were senior to him had been provided for. This generous conduct was subsequently rewarded; he became Rector, first of Pallas, and afterwards of Abington, where he was a predecessor of the late exemplary and learned Bishop Jebb; and with the rectory of Abington he held the Chancellorship of Emly, until his death in the month of July 1795. He married Griselda, the youngest of the two daughters and co-heiresses of

William Hobart, Esq., of High Mount, in the county of Cork. They had nine children, four of whom died in infancy. Of those which attained to manhood, the eldest, William Hobart, entered the Army, and had attained the rank of Captain in the 60th Regiment, when he died in the West Indies, in the year 1797. He was endowed with a high and enterprising spirit, for which he was not less remarkable than for his strength and activity of body. As an example of this, it may be mentioned, that two years before his death, he made an extraordinary escape from the French prison-ship at Point-à-Pitre, in Guadaloupe, by swimming from her in the evening in company with the master of a Bermudan vessel. Having reached the beach, and finding a canoe, they pushed off; and on the following day at noon, were taken up by the Bellona man-of-war off the Saints Isles.

Michael was their second child. John, their third, chose the profession of his father, whose character he seems to have very closely imitated; for he is universally reported to have been as remarkable for his earnest and affectionate zeal as a parish priest as he was for his amiability as a man. He became Rector, first of Ulloa, and afterwards of Lattin in the county of Tipperary. His career of usefulness was suddenly terminated by typhus fever, taken during his assiduous attendance at the sick bed of his poor parishioners, among whom it was raging with extreme virulence. Their fourth child was a daughter, named Frances, who married Robert Ormsby, Esq., Major in the Sligo Militia, and died 1805, leaving one son. Their

fifth and youngest, Richard, following the steps of his brother Michael, entered the Navy, and ended a short but honourable service in March 1806, having been mortally wounded, as we shall hereafter have to relate, at the close of a very gallant action.

The earliest account which we have of him, whose course through life it will now be our endeavour to trace, is the commencement of his professional career, in November 1780. He had then just completed his twelfth year, and having shown a decided predilection for the naval service, his parents consented to his going to sea. With this view, a berth was secured for him in the Merlin, sloop-of-war, then commanded by Captain the Hon. James Luttrell, and lying in the Downs. At that early age he left his home, and proceeded first to London, to the house of his father's friend, Mr. Gorman, and thence, after being provided with his outfit, to the Downs, to join his ship. Captain Luttrell was the third son of the Earl of Carhampton, and an officer of great talent and promise. He seems to have early discovered the good abilities of young Seymour, who very speedily won his favour and esteem. For in the following year (March 1781), having been made a Post Captain, and appointed to the Portland, 50, he selected Seymour to accompany him, which he did, and in the month of May following attained the rating of midshipman. His new ship bore the flag of Rear-Admiral R. Edwards, and was appointed to the Newfoundland station. Admiral Edwards having been superseded April 2, 1782, Captain Luttrell was, on the following day, appointed to the

Mediator, of 44 guns, on the home station ; and on this occasion Michael Seymour was again invited to follow him. In the following winter he was for the first time engaged in a very warm action, which reflected high honour on the captain, officers, and crew of the Mediator.

The circumstances of this engagement are well deserving of narration, independent of the interest which they have, as relating to the first serious warfare witnessed by young Seymour.[1]

'It was on December 12, at seven o'clock in the morning, while cruising in the Bay of Biscay, that the Mediator, discovering five sail of large vessels to leeward, bore up and gave chase. On her approach, they shortened sail; and standing under top-sails, formed into the following line of battle a-head: Eugène, 36, American (brig), 14, Ménagère (*armée en flûte*), 34, Alexandre, 24, and Dauphin, 28, carrying in all 136 guns and 637 men. Captain Luttrell, not intimidated by the formidable appearance of the enemy, stood resolutely on till ten o'clock, when, as he passed along their line, they opened their fire, which was returned from the Mediator with so much steadiness and effect, that in half-an-hour their line was broken. The three largest of the ships wore, under an easy sail, and continued to engage the Mediator with much briskness till eleven, when by a skilful manœuvre, and superior fire, Captain Luttrell cut off l'Alexandre, and compelled her to strike. Witnessing her fate, and fearing it might be their own, her companions instantly went off before the wind,

[1] 'The Naval Chronicle,' p. 91.

under a crowd of sail. At half-past twelve, having secured his prize, Captain Luttrell renewed the chase, and the enemy separated. At five in the evening, he got within shot of la Ménagère, and commenced a sharp running fight, which continued till nine; when, on his ranging up close alongside of her, she hauled down her colours. Thus two sail out of the five were captured. On the following morning at daybreak, the brig and le Dauphin Royal were seen in the offing; but being close in with the Spanish coast, and having 340 prisoners on board, with only 190 of his own men to guard them, Captain Luttrell thought it most prudent to steer for England with his prizes. In this action, l'Alexandre had six men killed and nine wounded, and la Ménagère had four killed and eight wounded; but, in consequence of the enemy having directed their fire chiefly at the masts and rigging of the Mediator, not a man on board that ship was hurt. On the second night after the engagement, Captain Luttrell was alarmed by a violent explosion and cry of fire; which on enquiry, he found to have been occasioned by one of the lower-deck guns having been fired off by Captain Gregory, the Commander of l'Alexandre, who had laid a plot with the prisoners to rise and take the Mediator. The firing of the gun was the signal which had been agreed upon by the conspirators, to execute their design; but by the most prompt and indefatigable exertions of the officers, who instantly placed additional sentinels over the hatchways, and secured them by capstan bars, the accomplishment of this desperate scheme was prevented without bloodshed.

The intentions of Captain Gregory having been fully proved, Captain Luttrell considered him no longer entitled to his parole; and, with some of his accomplices, he was confined in irons during the remainder of the passage to England.'

Young Seymour had thus an opportunity of sharing in an engagement which required, on the part of his captain, much intrepidity of design, great coolness of execution, and considerable skill in manœuvring his ship. The conspiracy of so numerous a body of prisoners was also an occasion which called for prompt and energetic conduct. Captain Luttrell amply proved that he possessed all these requirements, and showed himself on this, as on other occasions, an officer under whom a youngster, with a zeal bordering on enthusiasm for the service, was likely to learn the best principles of his profession.

That these advantages were not lost on our young midshipman his subsequent conduct has amply proved. He loved, as well as respected and admired, his gallant captain; and the knowledge that he enjoyed his esteem, not only quickened his endeavours to deserve and retain it, but probably induced also that consciousness of ability which is often the most powerful stimulus to successful exertions.

In the following year (April 16, 1783) Captain Luttrell was removed from the Mediator, 44, into the Ganges, 74, probably on account of his recent gallant behaviour; and that his youthful favourite had continued to acquit himself to the satisfaction of his captain, we have the best proof, for he was again invited to accompany him in his new ship. But of the advantages which he thus enjoyed in the

first years of his naval service, he was soon to be deprived. Captain Luttrell retained the command of the Ganges only till the following September, when he gave up the active duties of his profession, and became Surveyor General of the Ordnance. That an officer, who had already so greatly distinguished himself, and had given promise of yet greater deeds, should thus early retire from active service, may naturally surprise us; but a sufficient cause for this conduct may probably be found in a delicate constitution: he died of consumption in the year 1788; and symptoms of this disease had perhaps shown themselves, and caused his friends to procure him this office, in order that he might try the effects of a more tranquil life. The regret of his young friend at his taking this step was very great, and deservedly so; for short as his connection was with Captain Luttrell, he ever afterwards regarded it as one of the happiest circumstances of his life. But it will be seen that he was not lost sight of, and that he had secured a permanent place in his captain's esteem and friendship. On giving up the Ganges, Captain Luttrell procured him a berth in the Europa, commanded by the Hon. Captain de Courcy, and bearing the flag of the Vice-Admiral S. J. Gambier, bound for Jamaica. It appears from the 'Memorandum of Services,' that Mr. Seymour was in March 1784 serving on board the Europa, and that in the following month he joined the Antelope, and in July 1784 he was appointed to the James, Captain Pakenham. The cause of this frequent change of ships does not appear. He remained in the James till September 1785, when the

climate of the West Indies had proved so injurious to his health, that he was compelled to invalid, and accordingly he returned to England in the Ariel, Captain Norman. His native air and the comforts of his home seem to have speedily restored his health; and this having been effected, he was anxious to be again at sea; for, though he had probably been very little if at all in Ireland since he quitted it for the first time in 1780, yet he applied in the following month for employment. To obtain this, he had no one to look to but his kind friend and patron Captain Luttrell, from whom we find the following letter, which though evincing, we are inclined to think, something of haste, proves that their separation had not lessened his desire to serve him:—

'Windsor Lodge, November 30, 1785.

'Dear Seymour,—I could not delay answering Captain Wainwright's letter longer, than to receive an answer from you. It is now too late for you to join the Queen, as I have declined the Admiral's offer. Good offers must always be caught at without delay. I can do nothing for you till Captain Berkeley has a ship. I am always sorry, but not angry, when people I wish well to neglect their own advantage, and remain,—Your's sincerely,

'JAMES LUTTRELL.'

After the receipt of this letter, he appears to have remained quietly at home for several months, in expectation of Captain Berkeley's getting a ship, and anxious, no doubt, to serve if possible with the friend of Captain Luttrell.

In this expectation he waited till the following April, when Captain Luttrell wrote to him: 'Captain Berkeley is to have the Pégase, and will soon have his commission: therefore you had better come over as soon as convenient.'

Le Pégase was commissioned, but not by Captain Berkeley. Mr. Seymour, however, obtained a vacancy in her, and joined her in June, under the command of Captain Marshall; her station was Portsmouth. In this ship he remained till June 1787, when Captain Berkeley having been appointed to the Magnificent, he procured his removal into that ship. The Hon. George Cranfield Berkeley, who now became his captain, was the third son of the fourth Earl of Berkeley, and married Emily Charlotte, sister of the Duke of Richmond. He was on terms of the warmest friendship with Captain Luttrell, for whose sake he was predisposed to regard Mr. Seymour with a friendly eye. His ship was ordered to cruise in the Channel, probably one of the best stations for exercising the vigilance and calling forth the energies of a young sailor. We are not aware that the Magnificent had any remarkable opportunity of distinguishing herself during the four years which Mr. Seymour served in her; but there are extant letters from Captain Berkeley which prove that his conduct was such as to justify the recommendation of Captain Luttrell, and to win the esteem and good will of his new captain.

Towards the close of the year 1787, a circumstance occurred which is not worth mentioning, except as tending to show the interest which was felt in him by those two discerning officers. Mr. Seymour had now been seven years

a midshipman, and he had been led by Captain Luttrell to expect that his captain would on the first vacancy rate him[1] 'master's mate:' but on the vacancy occurring, a junior was preferred before him. Conscious that he did not deserve to be thus passed over, his high spirit could not brook this treatment, and he immediately proposed to quit the ship. From a letter forwarded to him shortly afterwards by Captain Luttrell with one from himself, it appears that Captain Berkeley hastened to explain the cause of this apparent slight,—expressed 'the real good opinion he entertained of his conduct before this,'—his conviction, that his hasty step was to be attributed to his high spirit, and his readiness to overlook it and to receive him again into his ship; and he added, that he would not neglect his interests. In the letter which accompanied this, Captain Luttrell advised him to return to the Magnificent, and promised him that he would find Captain Berkeley, his friend. On this advice he acted: thus showing that, if at the bidding of a high spirit he had committed an error, he was not too proud to acknowledge it by retracing the step which he had hastily taken. He returned to the Magnificent, and on the first vacancy he was rated 'master's mate.'

The duties of a midshipman are not such as to furnish events likely to remain on record in testimony of professional zeal or ability; the best evidence of a midshipman's worth is the approbation and friendship of such officers as Captain Berkeley and Captain Luttrell.

[1] The present rank of sub-lieutenant is equivalent to that of ma ter' mat in those days.

But he was soon to be deprived of his kind friend Captain Luttrell. The disease, which had alarmed his friends five years before, had now become confirmed. In July 1788 we find the following letter written by him to his young friend in reply to his enquiries :—

'Dear Seymour,—I am much obliged to you for your enquiries after my health. I have been unwell, but am recovered. I am glad to hear Captain Berkeley was kind to you. I suppose you are tired of your cruise, as most of the time it rained and blew hard, if I may judge by the climate in England.—Yours, very sincerely,

'J. LUTTRELL.

This letter was carefully preserved among his papers, and shows the friendly terms to which Captain Luttrell admitted him. But notwithstanding this favourable account of his health, he became rapidly worse, and died on the 23rd of the following December. Mr. Seymour was thus deprived of a warm and able friend. His example, however, as an officer had made an impression on him which he never forgot ; his steady friendship, too, and persevering kindness, were remembered by Mr. Seymour to the last day of his life ; for by his last will he bequeathed to that son who bears his name, and has followed his profession, 'a gold Neptune red cornelian seal, given me' (he says) 'by my very dear lamented patron and friend, the Hon. James Luttrell, when I was a boy with him in the Mediator.'

Captain Berkeley was at Stoke, his seat in Sussex, at the time ; and wrote from thence the following letter, in

reply to one which Mr. Seymour had written to him on hearing of Captain Luttrell's death :—

'December 27, 1788.

'Dear Sir,—I received your letter last night, and can truly assure you, that before I received it, I had not forgot the legacy my dear, departed friend had left me: I mean by this yourself, who, I trust, will ever look up to me as willing, although perhaps not so able to patronise you as himself. Before this calamity, which has befallen us, I rather looked upon you as lent to me, and I believe I so expressed myself upon a former occasion; at present I hope I may look upon you as my own, as I think your behaviour will entitle me to say, that he would never have patronised you or recommended you to me, had he not thought it perfect. I shall presume, however, that you wish to think as I do upon the subject, and of course give you the advice of a sincere friend. At this moment it would not be right for you to press yourself upon the feelings of the Duchess, who must be occupied with the loss she has felt in her brother; at a future period, it may be both right and proper, and I shall take care to give it proper effect. I shall be in town on Tuesday or Wednesday, and shall see Her Royal Highness upon the melancholy event which has deprived us of a valued friend. If I then have an opportunity of mentioning with propriety your name, you may rest assured I shall not neglect it. In the meantime I shall hope that you will look upon me in the light of that friend you have lost, and consult me as such, being, with great truth,—Yours very sincerely,

'G. BERKELEY.'

The Duchess mentioned in this letter was Anne, sister of Captain Luttrell, who had married H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland, brother to George III. Mr. Seymour had been now eight years in the service, and it was not unreasonable that he should be looking for promotion; for attaining this he had probably depended much on Captain Luttrell for assistance; and on finding himself deprived of this, it was natural that he should look anxiously to the Duchess, whose high station would appear to enable her to grant his wishes. He was, however, disappointed; and only attained the rank of lieutenant two years afterwards, after ten years' service as midshipman.

He obtained this step, October 29, 1790, on board the Magnificent, of which Captain Richard Onslow took command about the same time, in place of Captain Berkeley.

The attainment of the rank of lieutenant was at that time, we believe, generally reckoned the most important step in the naval service, especially for those who were without powerful connections or interest to procure it for them; and this not only from its being the first step, but also from the opening which it gave for establishing character, and thus of ascending the higher grades of rank. The midshipman, on becoming a lieutenant, was a commissioned officer—he became one of a few, who had often the responsible charge of the ship, and he had opportunities of displaying zeal, energy, and ability, such as while a midshipman he might long sigh for in vain. To one, therefore, who had exceeded the preparatory term of service by

four years, and who was well aware that his advancement in his profession depended entirely on his own conduct, promotion must have been a source of no ordinary joy and thankfulness. That these feelings were strong in Lieutenant Seymour's mind on attaining this rank in the service was strikingly evinced by one of his first subsequent acts. His father communicated to his friend Mr. Gorman, not long afterwards, a circumstance well calculated to awaken parental pride, and to gladden a parent's heart. Michael, in announcing to him his promotion, had acquainted him that he now felt he had a fair prospect of rising in the service—that he had health and vigour, and loved his profession, and that it would be his own fault if it did not earn him an independence; that it was his intention therefore entirely to forego the sum of money which his father had annually allowed him, which, with anything else that he had intended for him, he desired should be added to the portion of his only sister, then engaged to be married to a gentleman with small fortune. Those who read the following pages will rejoice to find that this sanguine anticipation of a successful career was amply realised; while those who intimately knew him will recognise in this act that same generous and disinterested spirit which so strongly marked his character and conduct through life.

Lieutenant Seymour continued to serve on board the Magnificent till October 1791, when the expectation of a war with Russia having subsided, the Magnificent was paid off, and Mr. Seymour returned to Ireland. England being at that period at peace with all foreign Powers, her naval

force was much reduced; the difficulty of getting employment was in consequence greatly augmented; and Mr. Seymour, low on the list of lieutenants and without powerful friends to help him, had the prospect of being long on shore. The year 1792 came and departed, finding him still unemployed. We have no doubt that his fondness for the service, and his dislike to an inactive life, had long ere this deprived his home of much of the charms which it otherwise justly had for him, and led him to apply more than once, though almost hopelessly, for a ship. The time, however, was now at hand when there was to be no lack of employment either for the Army or Navy of Great Britain. Early in 1793, hostilities having commenced between England and the French Republic, a large increase was ordered in the Navy; several ships were immediately commissioned, and among them the Marlborough, 74, by Captain Berkeley, who mindful of his old shipmate, and of the promises he had made him, lost no time in offering to take Mr. Seymour on board his new ship; an offer which was, no doubt, promptly and joyfully accepted. Lieutenant Seymour's appointment bears date March 27, 1793.

The Marlborough was ordered to join the Fleet under the command of Earl Howe, cruising in the Channel and watching the French; and when on June 1, 1794, the two fleets met off Ushant, the Marlborough formed one of the British line, and acted a very distinguished part in that memorable battle. She engaged the Sanspareille, 84, and the Mucias, 74, and all the three ships were completely dismasted, with a dreadful loss of life. The Marlborough

had silenced the fire of her two formidable opponents, when the Montagne, of 120 guns, came down under her stern, and poured into her a raking broadside of round and grape, which caused a serious destruction. The great disparity of force against which the Marlborough had to contend will account for the circumstance, that she not only lost her masts, but her killed and wounded, 137 in number, were more numerous than those of any other of the English ships. It was towards the close of the engagement, that one of the French ships appeared to have the intention of boarding the Marlborough, to repel which the boarders were ordered from their guns; and while Lieutenant Seymour was rushing up the hatchway with his men, a shot shattered his left arm, and entirely disabled him. Sir John Barrow, in his 'Life of Earl Howe,' says, 'A curious incident is said to have occurred on board this ship. When she was entirely dismasted and otherwise disabled, by the extreme severity of the conflict, the Captain, Hon. G. Berkeley, and the 2nd Lieutenant, Sir Michael Seymour, severely wounded, and the ship so roughly treated, that a whisper of surrender is said to have been uttered, which Lieutenant Monckton overhearing, resolutely exclaimed, "He would be d——d if she should ever surrender, and that he would nail her colours to the stump of the mast;" at this moment a cock, having by the wreck been liberated from the broken coop, suddenly perched himself on the stump of the mainmast, clapped his wings, and crowed aloud; in an instant three hearty cheers rang throughout the ship's company, and no more

talk of surrender.' Lieutenant Seymour's wound was announced to his Father, two days afterwards, in the following letter from his captain :—

'Marlborough at Sea, June 3, 1794.

'My dear Sir,—By desire of your son Michael, my brave and respectable lieutenant, I write a hasty line to inform you of our glorious victory over the French fleet. The claim of distinction which has been bestowed on the ship I command, I must entirely, after God, attribute to the zeal and fidelity of my officers, amongst whom your son stands conspicuous. He is very well, and I hope will continue so. He had the misfortune of being wounded a few minutes before his captain, and his arm is so badly broken, that I fear it must suffer amputation. But as it is his left arm, and likely to do well under the skill of those who attend him, I hope you will think it an honourable mark instead of a misfortune. Your son Richard is on board the Impregnable, and therefore I have not an opportunity of sending you accounts of him. We have taken seven sail of the line and sunk four. The Marlborough in fifty minutes boarded and beat two of them, an 84, La Sanspareille, and a 74, in which unequal struggle your son met his accident. I am, with great truth, sincerely yours,

'G. BERKELEY.'

The anxiety of the parent on the announcement of this calamity was doubtless greatly alleviated by the honourable mention which it made of his son. His wound

was received between the elbow and the wrist: his own immediate impression was, from the manner in which it was broken, that he must lose his arm, and he desired that it might be at once taken off; but the surgeon determined, if possible, to save it; the consequence of this was much severe pain, which had nearly cost the sufferer his life; for mortification commenced, upon which the arm was instantly amputated, some way above the elbow, instead of below it, as might have been done in the first instance.

In the journal of an attached friend, we find it noted that in July 1794, 'Michael Seymour arrived in London, *a melancholy object.*' This remark probably arose not merely from the loss of his arm, but from the injurious effects of the operation on his general health, which obliged him, as soon as he could leave the ship, to seek the recovery of his strength in the quiet of a few months on shore.

After a victory such as that of June 1, there generally follows a large promotion, in which those who have been most prominent in the action receive the reward of their gallantry; we believe we may add, that a claim of this kind is considered stronger, when one who has distinguished himself has had the misfortune to be severely wounded; promotion being the most acceptable compensation which the country can confer on the sufferer. It is not surprising therefore, that Lieutenant Seymour, conscious that he enjoyed his captain's high approbation of his conduct in the engagement, should feel very sanguine of obtaining an

increase of rank. But the list of the promoted appeared, and his name was not among them. Upon this, he respectfully pressed his claims upon the Admiralty, but was unsuccessful. Whereon he wrote to request the assistance of his captain. From Captain Berkeley's letters, in reply to those written by Lieutenant Seymour, on this subject during the summer and autumn of 1794, his case appears to have been somewhat thus: Lieutenant Seymour felt that he might without presumption look for his promotion. He had been now fourteen years in the service, and nearly four years a lieutenant; he was aware that his name stood well at the Admiralty, his captains having uniformly given him the most satisfactory certificates of conduct; he knew too that Captain Berkeley had given a good report of his conduct in the late glorious action, and besides this he had lost a limb, by which his health was for the time seriously impaired. All this gave him a solid case to lay before the Admiralty: can we wonder that he should press it on them, or that failing, he should look anxiously to Captain Berkeley? His first friend and patron had been removed by death; Captain Berkeley, who had succeeded to that title, and had so declared himself, might at any time be removed in a similar manner. He knew that Captain Berkeley had considerable influence: he had a seat in Parliament; he had high connections, and he had a high place on the Navy List. Lieutenant Seymour therefore judged, that if he chose to exert himself in his behalf, he could do so successfully; and he did not hesitate to request and in becoming terms *repeat* his request, that

he would extend to him his friendly aid at this time. There is something very repugnant to a generous mind in thus urging one's own pretensions; but where pretensions are *just*, where there is a well-grounded consciousness of this, where, as in the Navy, promotion has not always run parallel with merit, and many a deserving officer has seen a less deserving junior frequently placed above him, simply because he had not the good fortune to have powerful friends to assist him, in such cases the truth will force itself on the mind, that to listen to the scruples of delicacy and be silent, is tantamount to the relinquishment of every hope. At a time, therefore, such as the year 1794, when this country was at war with a powerful nation, and Gazettes Extraordinary were continually announcing the gallant and successful feats of our Navy, it is not surprising that an ardent spirit such as Lieutenant Seymour's should, in spite of the unpleasantness attending it, persevere in urging his well-grounded claims.

Captain Berkeley seems to have entered largely into his feelings: he allowed that he had good pretensions to promotion, and expressed his readiness to assist him in obtaining it. He assured him that he had forwarded to the Admiralty certificates of his exemplary behaviour, and that none would rejoice in his promotion more than he should; that more than this, he was ready to repeat to the Admiralty his high opinion of him; and again, when, a few months later reports being abroad of an intended large promotion, Lieutenant Seymour requested him to mention his name to the Duchess, he says:

'I cannot blame your anxiety in putting yourself forward. I can assure you that should I hear for a certainty of any promotion, my wish of serving you will prompt me not to relinquish that title which I have taken up, and which I shall ever hope to merit.—Your's very sincerely,

'G. B.'

From this it is plain that Captain Berkeley gave him the sympathy of a sincere friend.

Finding that his hopes of promotion were not to be immediately realised, he went to Ireland; where he remained till the following February, when, Captain Berkeley having been appointed to the Formidable, Lieutenant Seymour accepted his offer of a vacancy, and proceeded to join her. On this occasion he took leave of his beloved and much-respected Father for the last time. That good man died in the following July, leaving behind him the best and most welcome gift which a parent can bequeath to his children, the memory of his high Christian excellence as a clergyman, a gentleman and a father. He had attained the age of 75 years.

The Formidable having a difficulty in getting manned, Lieutenant Seymour was, not long after joining her, sent to Gloucester to procure men. During his visit to that city his high spirits and manly frank demeanour, aided perhaps by the interest naturally felt in one who had shared in the late glorious battle—a battle not then eclipsed by the Nile and Trafalgar, gained him many friends among the residents of that city and its vicinity. After a stay of some weeks, he was recalled to his ship by the following letter from his captain :—

'Charles Street, May 15.

'Dear Sir,—I have represented to the Board of Admiralty the improbability of your raising any more men, and Lord Spencer informed me that orders should be sent to break up your rendezvous. I mentioned to him the hopes you had of promotion, to which he seemed to incline; but I do not think he seemed to infer that it would take place immediately. I should therefore think that you had better, when your orders arrive, come to town to fight your own cause: as I think you will succeed better in your petition, than any assistance I can give under the restrictions. I am,—Your's sincerely,

'G. B.'

The hopes of promotion, which this letter held out, though not immediately fulfilled, were not to be long deferred. Lieutenant Seymour went to sea in the Formidable, but from the Memoranda of Services, it appears that on June 12 in the same year, he joined the Commerce de Marseilles, Captain the Hon. George Grey, at Spithead, and on August 2, the Prince, Captain C. P. Hamilton. On the 11th of that month, that discerning and distinguished nobleman Earl Spencer, who had recently succeeded Lord Chatham as First Lord of the Admiralty, fulfilled the hopes he had encouraged a few months before, and promoted him to the rank of Master and Commander, (the term then in use), after nearly five years' service as Lieutenant.

The joy with which a naval officer welcomes his promotion is generally of a far less perfect nature than that

which is experienced by officers in the Army. In the latter service, the officer gains his accession of rank without losing his occupation or being separated from his companions; but in the Navy it rarely happens that an officer when promoted remains in his old ship, and, what is more serious, his promotion very frequently sends him ashore to remain there for many months, nay, in some cases years, unemployed. Such was the case with Captain Seymour on attaining the rank of Commander. For ten months he continued unemployed; and but for the happy circumstance of the First Lord of the Admiralty being at that time one who ever proved himself as willing to encourage as he was apt to discern professional zeal and ability, he might have remained yet longer idle. On June 28, 1796, Earl Spencer showed his sense of Captain Seymour's claims by appointing him Acting Commander of the Fly, a sloop-of-war cruising in the Channel; and on August 9 he gave him the command of the Spitfire. Captain Seymour had now full scope for the exercise of that zeal and talent for the service, of which he had given such good promise, while in the subordinate grades of his profession. The Spitfire carried 18 eighteen-pound carronades and 2 long six-pounders, and was ordered to cruise in the British Channel. In the active war then raging between this country and France, this was a station, which called for the utmost vigilance in watching for, and promptitude in profiting by, opportunities of annoying the enemy; while the dangerous nature of much of both the French and English coasts afforded the finest occasions

for the exercise of able seamanship. Captain Seymour was never at a loss on either of these points. 'The energy, zeal and superior ability, which Captain Seymour displayed' (writes one, who served under him, in the Spitfire, as Lieutenant) 'can rarely have been surpassed. His vigilance was such, that scarcely any vessel, which was met with, night or day, was passed by without examination. Captain Seymour was very much on deck, his glass constantly in his hand, observing every vessel in sight, and he was almost always the first to notice any one of suspicious appearance, when not a moment was lost in pursuing her. It was especially on the coast of France, near the Isle of Bas, that the activity of the Spitfire was conspicuous; that part of the French coast is dangerous from the number of the rocks and the rapidity of the tides; the French pilot, when the Spitfire was in chase of an enemy, would hardly ever go in so close to the shore as Captain Seymour wished; and on such occasions he would frequently take the charge out of the pilot's hands, place his French book of charts (which had been taken in a privateer) upon the capstan, and steer the ship himself, often taking her inside the rocks, and running her close in to the shore, even in the night, with all the skill of the most experienced pilot.

'On one occasion, having observed two French brigs, laden with corn, sailing from the eastward towards the Isle of Bas, steering along shore as close as they possibly could, in order to avoid our cruisers, Captain Seymour determined, although night was coming on, to endeavour

to intercept them. With this view he immediately made sail; and although it was dark he ran in past the Triangles and other dangerous rocks with a press of sail, and by his own good pilotage got close in shore in Louisa Bay, just as the brigs had reached that place—they, no doubt, little dreaming that an enemy would venture into so dangerous a situation in the night—when the Spitfire (then in five-fathoms water) fired at them, upon which, instead of running their vessels on shore, as they might have easily done, the crews took to their boats, and made their escape so hastily, that their captains left even their watches in the cabins. Had they lashed their helms a-weather, they must have gone ashore. The Spitfire had to find her way out with her prizes, and succeeded under the same able pilotage of her captain. The Spitfire was of small force, carrying only 20 guns; yet Captain Seymour, with that undaunted spirit which belonged to him, never hesitated in chasing ships of a very superior force. I well remember an occasion on which a French convoy was seen going along the French shore, guarded by a large corvette of 28 guns, and two or three armed brigs and luggers; the Spitfire immediately went after the largest, and in the hope of bringing her to action, Captain Seymour gave up the opportunity of taking some of the merchant vessels and making prize-money, thinking little of this in comparison with the honour of engaging a French man-of-war of superior force; she unfortunately, but barely, got into the Isle of Bas. Never,' continues the same lieutenant, 'had officers and men more confidence in a captain than

had the Spitfire's in Captain Seymour. . . . . he was never at a loss, and his heart was thoroughly in the service to which he belonged. None who ever sailed with him could fail to observe his very superior sight with his glass, and his correctness of opinion with regard to strange vessels : whenever he was heard to say "a French privateer," or anything else which indicated an enemy in sight, every one in the ship was convinced of the truth of what their captain had pronounced.' Such was the impression made on the mind of one of the Spitfire's lieutenants by the general conduct and bearing of his captain : an impression, the justness of which was abundantly proved by the Spitfire's acts ; it is truly stated (in the 'Naval Chronicle') that 'no particular opportunity occurred for daring enterprise or gallant heroism, yet every cruise afforded ample testimony, both summer and winter, amidst calms and storms, that the Spitfire was in active duty.' Her home port was Plymouth, and it was a very rare thing for the Spitfire to run into harbour without being able to report some fresh proof of her activity. It should here be mentioned, that in his occasional visits to Plymouth, Captain Seymour had become acquainted with the family of the late James Hawker, Esq.,[1] a captain in the Royal Navy,

[1] Captain James Hawker was well known in his day as a good and brave officer. In a letter of Lord Nelson's, dated August 1804, with reference to the French admiral, La Touche Treville, from whom it had been strangely reported that he had run away, he writes : 'From the time of his meeting Captain Hawker in the Iris, I never heard of his acting otherwise than as a poltroon and a liar : contempt is the best mode of treating such a miscreant.' Lord Nelson's allusion is to the following facts. La Touche, as captain of the Hermione frigate, had fallen in with the English frigate Iris, and had

who resided there; and he had not long commanded the Spitfire before he became attached to Jane, the third daughter of his hospitable friend. This attachment happily proved mutual; they were married on January 20, 1798; and from that day Captain Seymour dated as much pure domestic happiness as often falls to the lot of man. But the sweets of domestic life were but rarely and briefly enjoyed by the captain of a man-of-war at that period. Captain Seymour had, on his marriage, purchased a house in the immediate vicinity of Plymouth; when in harbour, therefore, for however short a time, he was able to enjoy Mrs. Seymour's society; but his sojourns ashore were sometimes of but a few hours', often but of a few days', and at the utmost but of a few weeks' continuance; for the Spitfire was soon refitted and supplied, and soon at sea

reported the Iris as taking flight from him—the truth being the very reverse, as is shown by the log of the Iris, in relating her action with the Hermione on June 7, 1780. Captain Hawker also distinguished himself in command of the Hero, 74 guns, in the action with Admiral Suffrein in Porto Paya Bay, in April 1781. (See 'Despatches and Letters of Lord Nelson,' by Sir N. Harris Nicolas, vol. vi. p. 165.)

Captain Hawker's family consisted of:

1. John, well known at Plymouth as Colonel Hawker, commanding the South Devon Militia, and an active magistrate.

2. James, who attained the rank of Colonel in the Horse Artillery, and became a C.B.

3. Edward, who entered the Royal Navy, and attained the rank of Admiral.

4. Mary, who married Captain, afterwards Admiral, Boyles, R.N.

5. Elizabeth, who married Captain, afterwards Admiral, Ed. Oliver Osborne, R.N.

6. Jane, wife of the subject of this Memoir.

7. Sarah, who married John Luscombe, Esq., of Coombe Royal, near Kingsbridge.

8. Dorothea, wife of Sir William Knighton, Bart., G.C.H., a distinguished physician, and subsequently private secretary and keeper of the privy purse to His Majesty, George IV.

again; nor was her captain ever tempted to prolong his happiness ashore to the neglect of his duty at sea. Moreover, he had now a new spur to active zeal in the necessity of providing for a wife and children; for in October 1798, he became the father of a daughter, and in March 1800 of a son; this became a fresh stimulus to his devotion to that service to which he had long been bound by a generous affection, as well as by profession and a sense of duty to his country. It would be easy to extract from the Spitfire's log-books and from the records of the Admiralty detailed proofs of Captain Seymour's vigilance, while in command of that sloop; but since his zeal and ability were conspicuous more from the rapid succession of the small prizes which he captured than from any single gallant exploit, for which no opportunity offered, it will be sufficient to transcribe the following letters. On April 9, 1799, Admiral Sir Richard King informs the Admiralty Board that he has the satisfaction to transmit to them the following letter received by him from the Captain of the Spitfire:—

'Spitfire, Plymouth Sound, April 7.

'Sir,—I have the honour to acquaint you, that the Spitfire captured, in a violent gale of the 31st ult., Scilly, bearing NNW. fourteen leagues, the French brig privateer, Resolve, of 14 six- and eight-pounders, and 65 men, perfectly new, being her first cruise, and two days from St. Maloes, and had not made any capture. I am, Sir, &c.

'MICHAEL SEYMOUR.'

On April 22, 1800, Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Paisley, Bart., transmits from Plymouth the following :—

'Spitfire, Plymouth Sound, April 20.

'Sir,—I have the honour to acquaint you that at 4 A.M., on the 17th instant, the Bolthead bearing north, distant 9 leagues, chase was given to a brig to the eastward, in which at 7 a Guernsey brig privateer joined, and at 9 (for an hour) His Majesty's ship, Diamond, the former being left, hull down astern, at 11 gave over the pursuit, and both were out of sight at noon, when the Telegraph, from under Alderney, crossed on her, and having exchanged a broadside with her, dropped astern, and joined us; but the Spitfire, having distanced her also, at 2 P.M., Cape Lery bearing SSW., distant 4 leagues, brought to the chase, which proved to be the L'Heureuse Société of Pleinpoint, carrying 14 guns and 64 men, a new vessel, out three days, but had not made any capture. I am, Sir, &c.,

'MICHAEL SEYMOUR.'

Two months later Sir Thomas Paisley again writes to the Secretary of the Admiralty as follows :—

'Sir,—I have the pleasure to enclose for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a letter, which I received from that very active officer Captain Seymour, of His Majesty's sloop Spitfire, stating his having captured a very fine brig privateer, with which he arrived here this morning. I am, Sir, &c.,

'THOMAS PAISLEY.'

'Spitfire, Plymouth Sound, June 20, 1800.

'Sir,—I have the pleasure to acquaint you that this sloop captured yesterday, ten leagues SSE. from Scilly, the French brig privateer L'Heureux Courier, of Grenville, carrying 14 six-pounders and 54 men. She was on her return from her first cruise to the westward, and had made three captures, which reduced her complement.—I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.,

'MICHAEL SEYMOUR.'

Besides these three privateers, Captain Seymour captured at different times, the Allégrée, a valuable French ship, laden with ammunition and other warlike stores; a fine transport, armed with 14 guns; L'Aimable Manet, a privateer, having 14 guns and 69 men, and 3 smaller privateers; making his captures of armed vessels amount to 83 guns and upwards of 400 French seamen. These were the fruits of four years' service in the Spitfire on a station which was generally considered one of greater hardship than profit; and we believe it would be difficult to name a sloop of her size, which in the same space of time and on the same station, rendered greater services to the trade of this country or opposed greater obstacles to that of France. Captain Seymour had now, in the month of August, 1800, been five years a Commander, during four of which he had been in active service in command of the Spitfire. It is not surprising that after such a period of service, and with such evidences of a zealous and active discharge of duty, he should indulge the hope that he had

earned a fair claim to promotion. At this period, therefore, and *not till then*, he solicited further promotion. Lord Spencer still presided at the Admiralty: the administration of the affairs of the Navy by that nobleman was uniformly marked by the most prompt attention to, and the most sober consideration of, the claims of officers who had nothing to urge in their behalf, save the debt which their country owed them for their faithful services. In the present case Earl Spencer well sustained his high character in this respect. He had promoted Captain Seymour to his present rank, and had appointed him to the Spitfire, solely from a conviction of his merits; he had narrowly watched his conduct while in command of this vessel, and was glad to mark his approval of it; he needed not any second application, but at once promoted him to the rank of Post-Captain.

We can well imagine the joy with which one devoted to the naval service as Captain Seymour was, would hail this increase of rank. The Post-Captain, or, as he is now styled, Captain, in the Navy has attained as it were a resting-place in his ascent to the high places in his profession: he has no longer to toil for promotion; no junior officer can now outrun him in the race; nor will any exertion of his own enable him to advance more rapidly than his equals in rank; he may henceforth compete with others in an honourable emulation as to who shall render his country the best services, and who shall attain her highest honours, but for *promotion* he need be solicitous no more. To Captain Seymour, who had won his way to this rank by

twenty years' hard service, unaided by any favour, save that which he had gained by his own exertions, there must have been a special satisfaction in the attainment of this last step, granted, too, by the Admiralty, with an alacrity which distinctly recognised his claim to it.

He could not, however, quit without regret his little sloop and the crew who had so well supported him while in command of her. Four years' service together had not failed to originate on either side a mutual feeling closely approximating to friendship, and they could not part without mutual and sincere regret; 'although all were happy at his promotion,' says one of his lieutenants, 'for his own sake, yet Captain Seymour's loss to the Spitfire was most deeply felt.' The service, too, on which the Spitfire was employed was one peculiarly congenial to his active spirit; and therefore, though thankful for his promotion and rejoicing in it, he could not bid farewell to his officers and crew, and retire for an uncertain period to a shore life, without much reluctance.

Captain Seymour continued to reside in the house which, on his marriage, he had taken in the vicinity of Plymouth. There, in the society of his wife, and in frequent intercourse with her family, who principally resided in Plymouth, and with a numerous naval acquaintance, he found much tranquil happiness; the fruits of his active vigilance in the Spitfire having provided him with the means of living respectably and comfortably. But while this country continued at war with France, and opportunities of rendering good service were daily presented to the

British Navy, Captain Seymour could not long remain satisfied while unemployed. For a year subsequent to his promotion, his applications for a ship were wholly unsuccessful. Early in the year 1801 his hopes received a serious blow in the retirement of Earl Spencer from the Admiralty, that nobleman quitting office with his distinguished colleagues Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville. He was succeeded by Earl St. Vincent. In the following October he had the satisfaction of being appointed Acting Captain of the Ville de Paris, an appointment which inspired hopes of something more permanent. But important events were now passing. This country was eager for peace, and determined to secure it, if honourable terms could possibly be obtained from the French Republic, or rather from her ambitious First Consul, who already swayed that nation. Preliminaries of peace were accordingly signed in October, preceding by a few months the Peace of Amiens, which was concluded on March 27, 1802. This would naturally prevent new ships from being commissioned, and would thus impair the prospects of those who were seeking a command. After retaining the command of the Ville de Paris for a few weeks, Captain Seymour was appointed Acting Captain of the Fisgard, in which he remained till the following February. From that time till April 1803, he remained unemployed. He was then again Acting Captain of the Ville de Paris for two months. At this period, namely, May 1803, the insincerity of France, all along suspected, became too manifest to be overlooked, and England was compelled to recommence hostilities.

This would naturally rekindle the hopes which Captain Seymour indulged of employment, as it would also increase his desire of it. But eight months rolled on, and his applications were unheeded, till in February 1804 he was appointed to the Colossus, but still only as Acting Captain. In May he resigned her to her own captain; and was again unemployed till February 1805, when he was appointed Acting Captain of the Illustrious. Disappointment again followed; for in the following May he was again obliged to retire to his home, where he continued unemployed, till January 1806. We can easily imagine how dispiriting must have been these successive disappointments. Captain Seymour had been now more than five years a Post-Captain, and during that time had been unable to obtain a ship of his own. Devoted to the service and having given proof of his skill and experience in it, he naturally longed for, and reasonably expected, employment.

His, however, was not a mind to be easily cast down by such trials; he had a natural buoyancy of spirit, combined with, or probably more truly arising out of, a firm trust in Providence, which, while conscious that he did not deserve to be thus neglected, would enable him to bear his disappointments with becoming patience; and his occasional employment, though but temporary and not of a very agreeable nature, seemed from time to time to renew his hopes of something better. In January 1806, he was appointed to the Warrior, but still only as Acting Captain. Early in this year he was called to endure a

trial of a severer nature, in the death of his younger brother, Richard. This event was communicated to him in the following letter from Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir William) Parker :—

'H.M.S. Amazon, Praga Bay, St. Jago.
'April 4, 1806.

'My dear Sir,—Distressing as the task is to be the harbinger of an event, so melancholy as I have now to impart, I cannot but feel additional regret, that it remains for me to prepare you for the loss of your poor brother, which I undertake in the hope it may reach you before the Gazette announces his death on the 13th ultimo, in action with la Belle Poule, French frigate, after a display of conduct that does the highest honour to his memory, and I may be permitted to add (from three years' servitude together), a loss to the service, and lamented by every one. He received the fatal wound, poor fellow, towards the close of the action, and suffered the amputation of his left thigh with wonderful fortitude; but it was shattered too high to afford any hopes of his recovery, and he expired immediately after the operation, bequeathing with his latest breath his love to you. . . . . I beg you to accept my best wishes for health and success and to believe me, my dear Sir,—Very truly yours,

'W. PARKER.'

The death of this brother was a severe affliction to Captain Seymour. They had been much together: Richard having first gone to sea in the Magnificent, under the

care of his elder brother, then a mate of that ship. Though not in the same ship, they both shared in the memorable battle of June 1. The elder brother's house was the younger's home when ashore in England, and the love which each had for the naval service naturally augmented their mutual affection. He had been three years First Lieutenant of the Amazon, and had shown himself a very excellent officer, when his career was thus prematurely cut short: a commission, promoting him to the rank of Commander, had been prepared at the Admiralty at the date of his death.[1] The intelligence of his death caused Captain

[1] He was sent by Captain Parker to obtain news of the movements of the French fleet from the American schooner Sally. The following intelligence was enclosed in the above letter, the letter being one of July 20, 1805, from the Victory at Gibraltar, from Lord Nelson to the Admiralty.

'Intelligence received from the American schooner Sally, Dumpey Wade, Master, from New Burn (N. Carolina), bound to Antigua, laden with lumber; boarded at six P.M., June 18, 1805, by H.M.S. Amazon. Extract from the Sally's log-book:

H.	K.	F.	Course	Winds
P.M.	7		S. by E.	E. by S.

'*Remarks.*—Saw 22 sail of large ships to the eastward, standing to the northward; supposed them to be the French fleet from Martinique going home.

'(A true copy.)

'(Signed) RICHARD SEYMOUR, Lieut.

'At noon the schooner was in lat. 27° 28′ N., long. 60° 58′ W., and ran only twelve miles, SSE., to the time the strange fleet was seen. From that time till the Amazon boarded the schooner she made little way, having the wind very light from SE. On asking the master and mate why they supposed the fleet seen by them was French, the master replied that an American brig from Martinique spoke him eight days before, and informed him that a squadron had arrived at Martinique from France; he therefore supposed the fleet seen to be that squadron returning home. The master's opinion of the course stood by the strange fleet was NNE.: the mate thought NNW. Both of them went to the mast-head, and were positive that the ships seen were men-of-war,

Seymour the deepest sorrow. He was at the time on board the Warrior, of which ship he retained the command for nearly six months, when in June (1806) his hopes of permanent employment were at length accomplished. Lord Barham became at this period the First Lord of the Admiralty. In applying to him for a ship, Captain Seymour had a strong case to lay before him: the Admiralty records would tell his Lordship how he had acquitted himself while in command of the Spitfire. Nearly six years had elapsed since his conduct in that vessel had gained him the rank of Post-Captain: during that period he had been the Acting Captain of no less than *six* ships, but had hitherto in vain solicited a ship of his own. Lord Barham replied to his application by appointing him to the Amethyst, a fine 36-gun frigate.

Thus at length Captain Seymour obtained the great object of his wishes, the command of a fast-sailing frigate, to whose discipline and conduct he could devote his best energies and experience. He lost no time in joining her; and having fitted her out with that alacrity and attention, which high hope and expectation would naturally beget in every lover of the naval profession at such a period, he

having royals, staysails, and all sails set, showing them as low as the lower yards. On referring back to the schooner's log, I found entered on it the intelligence obtained by him from the brig, as before stated, from Martinique.

'(Signed) RICHARD SEYMOUR.

'(Copy.)

'(Signed) NELSON and BRONTÉ.'

(From 'The Despatches and Letters of V. A. Lord Viscount Nelson,' by Sir N. Harris Nicolas.)

was soon at sea. The Amethyst was attached to the Channel Fleet: a station for which Captain Seymour's four years' service in the Spitfire had rendered him peculiarly competent; his study of the French charts while in command of that vessel, and his own diligent investigation of the enemy's coast, having given him an accurate acquaintance with its nature, such as was possessed by very few officers of his day. It was the practice of the Admiral in command occasionally to detach his frigates for special services, particularly to watch for the enemy's cruisers on their departure from or their return to the ports on the Channel coast. On this service, which from the favourable openings which it afforded was eagerly sought and highly prized, certain frigates were employed for a few weeks, when they were replaced by others, and rejoined the fleet. During the first two years of Captain Seymour's employment on this station, it does not appear that he was so fortunate as to meet with any opportunity of proving his skill and courage, and manifesting the high state of discipline into which he had brought his ship's company. Another year, however, was not to pass away, without such an opportunity. At the beginning of November 1808, the Amethyst was under the orders of Lord Amelius Beauclerk, who commanded a detached squadron cruising off L'Orient. On the 9th day of this month the squadron lay at anchor at the Glenans Isles, and the Amethyst received orders to proceed to watch the NW. entrance or outlet of Port Louis, one of the passages into L'Orient. On the 10th she spoke the

Emerald, Captain F. Maitland, on her way to watch the SE. passage. In standing in to reconnoitre the enemy's ships in the afternoon, the Amethyst was fired upon by the forts, but without effect. About half-past five on that evening she was close in with the NW. point of the Isle of Groix, which lies opposite L'Orient—so close that it was almost impossible for an enemy to escape unseen by this passage. The night was unusually dark, not a star to be seen, and the wind blew strong from the eastward; everything thus combined to encourage the sailing of ships from L'Orient. In writing, a few days afterwards, to a friend and relative then in command of a frigate on another station, Captain Seymour says: 'At sunset the Amethyst was in 15-fathom water within a long gun-shot distance of the mortar-battery on the NE. point of Isle Groix. At six P.M. being quite dark, on this same November 10, I wore, to the great relief of the master's, and pilot's mind.'

It would appear that the Amethyst was now under treble-reefed fore, and main, and close-reefed mizen topsails, and mizen staysail, with her head about SE. by S. drifting towards the NW. point of Groix. At a quarter before seven P.M., two guns were fired from Point Talut, and three flashes, with no report, were also observed, in the same direction; but knowing that the Emerald was close in, on that side to the SE., it was supposed and remarked that 'her boats were busy.' This circumstance, however, was almost immediately followed by the report of a sail astern closing, on which the Amethyst was

instantly kept off a point, her fore tack hauled on board, and cleared for action. A scrutinising examination of the stranger pronounced her to be small, and running to leeward, the helm was therefore put a-weather, a reef shook out of the top-sails, the top-gallant sails set, and the ship steered for the chase, which being well to seaward of

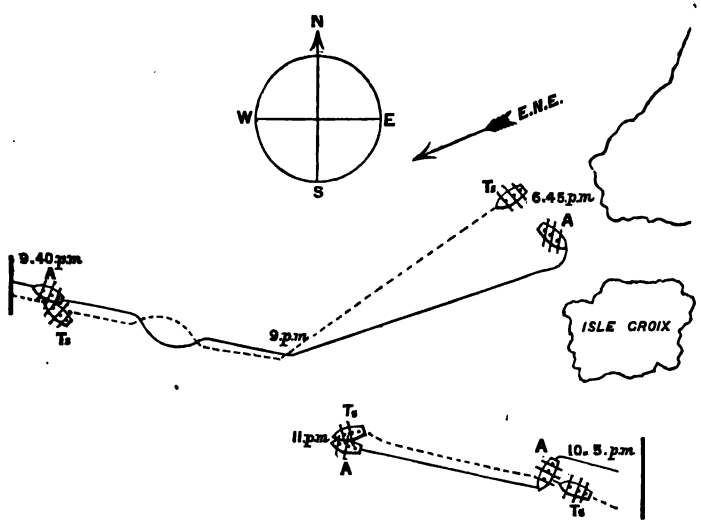

DIAGRAM OF THE ACTION OF THE AMETHYST AND THE THÉTIS.

the Amethyst, the latter felt secure of the impossibility of her escape. The darkness of the night was such that she was still thought to be small, and 'perhaps an American runner.' At eight P.M., however, the night glasses showed that the stranger exhibited a broader appearance, evidently from an alteration in the trim of her sails. The Amethyst, who was now drawing up fast towards her chase, and

preparing to set her larboard studding sails, fired a musket at the stranger, then a second, of which no notice was taken; and observing indistinctly through the extreme darkness of the night a royal of a peculiar colour, and cut well set, the nine-pounder chase gun was tried, and from the stillness and silence which reigned on board the Amethyst, the shot was heard to tell on the stranger's stern, bringing an instant reply from her stern chase guns, with a display of lights throughout her decks, and her stern boat, which was cut away, floated rapidly past the Amethyst. Thus began the severe contest, the particulars of which we will endeavour to relate.

As the Amethyst closed with her chase, her size and the cut of her sails made it clear that she was a large ship; and on the possibility that more ships might have left the coast, the Amethyst made the secret night signal with rockets and set her main royal and lower studding sail, but almost immediately hauled the latter in, as the stranger was observed to haul his larboard studding sails in, and suddenly to alter his course from SW. to WNW. This change was immediately followed by the Amethyst; and at about nine P.M., so fast did she draw up with her object of pursuit, that it became evident that the moment of closer contest was about to arrive. The latter was seen, as if in preparation for what was to happen, to haul in her lower studding sail; whilst the Amethyst shortened sail to her three top-sails, top-gallant sails, and fore-sail, steering so as to keep her chase on with her larboard spare anchor stock. The running fight, which had continued up

to this time, had occasioned no serious damage to the Amethyst, the enemy's shot having taken effect principally on her mizen mast and mizen rigging, whilst, in return, she had received some hard blows,[1] neither few nor ill directed. About three ships' length, only, now separated the two ships, who were running at the rate of eight or nine knots, when the enemy, as if determined to give the Amethyst her starboard raking broadside, put her helm hard-a-port, and although from the rate of speed at which she was running, every chance seemed to favour the success of her manœuvre, so quickly was her intention seen, that it was most skilfully avoided by the Amethyst's hard-a-starboard helm, which rapidly altered the position of the enemy as well as her own, and resulted in the non-effect of every shot of the Frenchman's broadside, except three of his after carronades, which it would appear had been reserved, and which came into the after part of the Amethyst's quarter-deck.

It was now the Amethyst's turn to try her guns; and, finding that her antagonist had righted her helm, and was preparing to resume her former course, the Amethyst's helm was put a-port, she ranged up within half-pistol shot distance of the enemy's starboard beam, and gave her first larboard broadside; a severe fire was now kept up on both sides for some time, the Amethyst drawing gradually ahead of her opponent, who, in another attempt to rake by passing under her stern, ran the Amethyst on

[1] It was afterwards acknowledged that seven men were killed at the Thétis's wheel, the greater part of them during the running fight.

board with great violence, between the main and mizen chains. Some hard fighting now took place, and some stink-pots and other combustibles thrown on board by the enemy set fire to some powder in the Amethyst's cabin, which injured several of her men:[1] an attempt was also made on the part of the enemy to board, and her captain, who was himself gallantly leading his boarders, was severely wounded on his bowsprit. The jib-boom of the enemy, which had fouled the Amethyst's mizen rigging, now gave way, and the ships separated, favourably to the latter, whose larboard raking broadside told on the enemy, who again took her place abreast of the Amethyst, with the difference that the latter was now to leeward of her determined antagonist.

At a quarter-past ten the enemy's fire brought down the Amethyst's mizen mast in three pieces on the quarter-deck, whereby her wheel was knocked away, both ships, continuing hotly engaged at the distance of not more than a pistol shot, running parallel to each other. At twenty minutes past ten the enemy's mizen mast was observed to fall.[2] At about eleven the enemy's fire became slacker, his helm was put a-weather, and his gallant intention of another trial at boarding became evident. The Amethyst's guns were now held fast, and with grape and canister awaited in perfect silence, the approaching moment of

[1] At this time a seaman of the Amethyst performed a gallant action, by seizing in his hat a shell still in a state of fusion, and throwing it overboard.

[2] When the Amethyst's mizen mast fell, the enemy cheered, and we cheered in return; but when that of the Thétis went by the board, and we cheered, there was no cheer from her in return.—M. C. S. (Note by one of the officers of the Amethyst.)

another struggle; a short respite only intervened, and the grazing of the ships' hulls, with the distinctly heard French order, L'Abordage! was the signal for the Amethyst's well-prepared broadside to go off, as it did, like the report of a single gun, causing a destruction among the enemy's crew that effectually checked their boarding. On the Amethyst's quarter-deck, however, now crowded with her own boarders, much mischief was done by the enemy's musketry, and from her armed tops. The two ships had been secured to each other from the moment that the Frenchman had laid the Amethyst alongside, the latter's best bower anchor having hooked the second port of the enemy's main deck, and thus did they remain till the close of the action.[1] The Amethyst's guns still continued their fire; but the Frenchman's resistance was principally confined, during the latter part of the engagement, to a heavy fire of musketry, which from the circumstance of her having one hundred soldiers on board, in addition to her crew, caused much damage. The moment, however, had arrived when even this could not avail, and about a quarter past midnight, after upwards of three hours' contest, the enemy was carried by the Amethyst's boarders, and proved to be the French frigate La Thétis, of 44 guns.

This hard-fought action had scarcely terminated, when fresh cause for alarm appeared on board the Amethyst. That ship had received several shots in her hull, and suddenly made three feet and a half water; the enemy was at the same time on fire in several places; and a strange ship

[1] See public letter.

was seen astern, coming down under a press of sail from the eastward. By cutting away the best bower anchor of the Amethyst, the ships were separated, and the boarders succeeded in getting the fire under on board La Thétis. The stranger, on approaching, made a signal, which was not understood. By the uncertain light of the moon, she had the appearance of a large French ship; serious alarm was excited lest she should be an enemy. Captain Seymour enquired of the surviving commander of the Thétis if he had previously seen any ship, or expected any to sail from L'Orient, and was answered in the negative: but so strong was his apprehension that she was an enemy, that he observed to his master,—'Well, Fair, we have had a severe night of it, and we have taken our prize; it's rather hard that this great ship should now come up and take us;' and as the pumps were set to work to get the water out, some of the after guns on the larboard side were manned to receive the stranger. These apprehensions, however, were speedily removed by a hail, which informed the Amethyst that she was H.M.S. Triumph, Captain Sir Thomas Hardy; by whom the signal-rockets sent off previous to the action had been answered; but she had been fortunately unable to arrive in time to interrupt the action. It was afterwards satisfactorily proved that the Triumph had made a wrong signal on approaching the Amethyst, and that the blame of this momentary alarm lay entirely with her. Twenty minutes later, the Shannon, 38-gun frigate, Captain P. B. V. Broke, joined from the eastward. These two ships proved now of the utmost

service; the surgeons from each were speedily on board the Thétis and the Amethyst, rendering all possible assistance; and the Thétis, now totally dismasted, was taken in tow by the Shannon.

Captain Seymour had now time to survey the loss sustained on board his ship. It proved considerable: out of a crew of 261 men and boys, one second lieutenant of marines (Bernard Kindall), 10 seamen, and 8 marines were killed; her wounded consisted of one first lieutenant of marines (Samuel John Payne, dangerously), one master's mate (Richard Gibbings, mortally), one midshipman (Lawford Miles, severely), her boatswain (Leonard Taylor), captain's clerk (Thomas Gibson), 32 seamen, 12 marines, and 2 boys: total, 19 killed and 51 wounded. The ship herself, besides the fall of her mizen mast, had her rigging and sails cut to pieces, and her fore and main masts greatly injured. The destruction on board the Thétis was immense. That ship was totally dismantled. Out of a crew of 436 men and boys (including 106 French soldiers) her captain and 163 officers,[1] seamen, and soldiers, were killed, and 102 wounded. It is a melancholy fact connected with this action, that out of those 106 soldiers who embarked that same afternoon from L'Orient, only 13 were left alive at midnight. This prodigious slaughter, as well as the disabled state of the ship, proves the high discipline of the Amethyst's crew and the precision with which her guns were pointed: it proves, also, the brave resistance made by the Thétis's officers and crew. Captain Jacques Pinsun,

[1] Captain Crouch's account.

her commander, was an able seaman and a very brave man ; he and his ship's company had served together for more than two years ; he had confidence in his crew, and they in their captain, and no frigate ever made a more gallant and persevering defence. On the death of their captain, they had a worthy successor in Lieutenant J. Dédé, who, as Captain Seymour stated in his official letter, 'acted with singular firmness, and was the only Frenchman on the quarter-deck when the British boarded.' Unfortunately, Lieutenant Dédé afterwards forfeited the esteem of his generous captor, by uniting with the two officers who were next to himself in command on board the Thétis, in swearing before the Prize Court, by way of making their defeat more palatable to the French Government, that the Thétis was captured by a 74 and two frigates. This is easily disproved. The Thétis had been not only taken possession of, but actually cut clear from the Amethyst, when the appearance of the Triumph caused Captain Seymour to enquire of Lieutenant Dédé, then on board the Amethyst as a prisoner, whether he expected any large ship from L'Orient. But a more satisfactory refutation of the sworn assertion of these officers is contained in the following extract from a letter written by an officer on board the Triumph, and published at or about the same time as Captain Seymour's official letter: 'At twelve they ceased firing, and at one A.M. we saw the two ships close to us.' The Shannon did not join till fifteen or twenty minutes later than the Triumph.

The Thétis was bound to Martinique with troops,

and 1,000 barrels of flour for the relief of that island. The following statement will very clearly show the comparative force of the two ships:—

		Amethyst	Thétis
Broadside guns	No.	21	22
	lbs.	467	524
Crew . .	No.	261	437
Size . .	tons	1046	1090

It is right to mention here the generous conduct of the captain, officers, and crew of the Shannon; both the Triumph and the Shannon had, from their proximity to the scene of action, a claim for a share of the prize-money, though they had no part in the conflict; the business, however, of taking possession of the prize and putting both ships in a safe state was no sooner completed than Captain Broke reported to Captain Seymour, that the admiration with which he and his officers and crew regarded the gallantry displayed by the Amethyst in the late action was such that they had unanimously resolved to forego all share in the prize which had been so hardly won. The Thétis, in tow of the Shannon, proceeded to Plymouth: thither the Amethyst, also, was obliged to go without delay, the damage which she had sustained being very considerable.

On their arrival at Plymouth, the victory which the Amethyst had achieved was received with the utmost enthusiasm. So sanguinary and so gallant a frigate action had not been fought during this eventful war, and the public were not slow to award it the high praise it merited. Captain Seymour lost no time in reporting his capture to

Lord Gambier, the Admiral of the station, and to the Board of Admiralty; to the former in the following letter:—

'Amethyst, Hamoaze, November 15, 1808.

'My Lord,—I have the most sincere pleasure in acquainting you that H.M.S. the Amethyst, under my command, captured, the 10th inst., at night, the French frigate La Thétis, of 44 guns, and a crew of 330 men who had served two years together, and 106 soldiers, from L'Orient for Martinique.

'Being close to the NW. point of Groix, she was seen a quarter before 7 P.M., and immediately chased, and a close action began before 10 o'clock, which continued with little intermission till about twenty minutes after midnight.

'Having fallen on board for a short time after ten, and from a quarter past eleven, when she intentionally laid us on board till she surrendered, about an hour, she lay fast alongside, the fluke of our best bower anchor having entered her foremost main-deck port, and she was, after great slaughter, boarded and taken possession of, and some prisoners received from her before we disengaged the ships. Shortly after, a ship of war was seen closing fast under a press of sail, which proved to be the Triumph, which immediately gave us the most effectual assistance that the anxious and feeling mind of such an officer as Sir Thomas Hardy could suggest. At half-past one the Shannon joined, received prisoners, and took La Thétis in tow. She is wholly dismasted, dreadfully shattered, and had her commander (Pinsun, Capitaine de Vaisseau), and

one hundred and thirty-five men killed, one hundred and two wounded, amongst whom are all her officers, except three. Amethyst has lost nineteen killed and fifty-one wounded, amongst the former is Lieutenant Bernard Kindall, a most promising young officer of the Royal Marines, who suffered greatly, and that invaluable officer Lieutenant S. J. Payne, dangerously wounded. The mizen mast shot away, and the ship much damaged and leaky. No language can convey an adequate idea of the cool and determined bravery shown by every officer and man of this ship, and their truly noble behaviour has laid me under the greatest obligation. The assistance I received from my gallant friend the First Lieutenant, W. Goddard Blennerhasset, an officer of great merit and ability, is beyond all encomium. Lieutenants Hill and Crouch, and Mr. Fair, the Master, (whose admirable exertions, particularly at the close of the action, when the enemy was on fire, the boarders employed, and the ship had suddenly made two feet water, surmounted all difficulties) are happily preserved, to add lustre to His Majesty's Service. In justice to Monsieur Dédé, the surviving commander of La Thétis, I must observe he acted with singular firmness, and was the only Frenchman on the quarter-deck when we boarded her. I have the honour to be, &c.

'MICHAEL SEYMOUR, Captain.

'To Admiral Lord Gambier.'

The public press was loud in its commendations of the skill and gallantry displayed on board the Amethyst.

The following extract of a letter, (from Captain Seymour to Captain Edward Hawker) dated November 17, alludes to this:—'You will give me credit for more honesty of heart than to suppose I would from any vain motive enclose you any printed panegyricks on my own or the dear Amethyst's conduct, but give you a regular account of my own as facts occurred, had not your dearest mother and sister Jane, who are very well (but the latter's nerves a little shattered, as I'll explain) insisted on it. So enclosed they are, from Mr. Haydon's paper, sent with a warm note to me. Thanks to Heaven, my mind was clear, and I felt during the greater part of the action delighted, at ease, under occasional anxiety, and on *one* or *two* critical occasions, under apprehensions.' Of Captain Seymour's cool and deliberate resolution, the action presented abundant proofs; without it he could not possibly have manœuvred his ship with such consummate skill. His gallant and able master, whose place was by his captain's side on the quarter-deck, has assured the writer of these pages, that nothing could exceed Captain Seymour's cool intrepidity throughout the action, 'but I was much struck,' he said, 'when on the moon's rising at a most critical period of the fight and revealing the Thétis returning gallantly to the contest, he turned to me, and said, "Look, Fair, what a subject for a painter!"'

The allusion which Captain Seymour makes to the 'shattered nerves' of Mrs. Seymour related not merely to the emotions which would naturally be awakened in the mind of an ardently attached wife on the safe return of

her husband from such an action, but to feelings most painfully excited in Mrs. Seymour's mind by scenes which were now passing under her own roof. Two of the Amethyst's Midshipmen, Mr. Richard Gibbings and Mr. Lawford Miles, the one mortally, the other severely wounded, had been on the ship's arrival immediately removed to Captain Seymour's house, where they were nursed most assiduously by Mrs. Seymour. Mr. Miles recovered; but the death of his companion is thus feelingly related by Captain Seymour, (also to Captain Hawker, November 18):—

'I have just closed a letter to the best of men, an uncle of my beloved Richard Gibbings, one of the mates who was mortally wounded among the leading boarders—a relation of my own, the best of young men, with a heavenly disposition, and adored by all on board—relating, as I have daily done, his state and now his last moments. Dearest Jane loved him, and has had her share of affliction, for he is here, and to be buried on Monday, when I have the last sad office to perform to the bravest and best of youths. He is about eighteen; a son of Rev. M. Gibbings of Gibbings Grove, co. of Cork, and Bedford. Sir Sidney Smith had him, when I was unemployed, signal midshipman in the Dardanelles, in Pomfrey, etc. Too much of this sad theme.'

A tablet to the memory of this brave youth may be seen in Charles Churchyard, Plymouth. A ball, fired from the rigging, had entered his head and passed out at his right eye. During the ten days that he survived, he bore his sufferings without a murmur. No man had a

heart more tenderly alive to these painful drawbacks to the joys of victory than had Captain Seymour.

Meanwhile congratulations poured in from various quarters: as well, as from many friends and relatives, amongst them were propositions that he should attend the expected Levée, in reference to an intimation which had been made to him, that he might, if he pleased, receive the honour of Knighthood on appearing at Court, but which he expressed his intention to decline, and which in fact he did decline.

The contents of the following letter from the First Lord of the Admiralty were to him a far more welcome tribute of approbation than the being *dubbed* a knight:—

'Admiralty, November 18, 1808.

'Sir,—I have just received your letter of the 16th inst. I shall be very happy in the opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with you, when you come to London on leave of absence.

'I have to regret that, in consequence of my absence yesterday at a Cabinet Council, the Board of Admiralty has conveyed to you a very inadequate statement of the attention which appears to me to be due to the very brilliant exertion of gallantry and persevering intrepidity which has so gloriously distinguished the conduct of yourself and all who fought under your orders on November 10. I have the greatest satisfaction in stating to you, that His Majesty expressed his gracious approbation of your conduct in the action with La Thétis in the strongest terms;

and that His Majesty has been graciously pleased to confer upon you, as a mark of his royal favour, a Medal such as His Majesty has on former occasions bestowed, in the event of great naval victories, on such Captains of line-of-battle ships as had distinguished themselves on those occasions. I shall have the honour of presenting you with the Medal on your arrival in town. The promotion of the First Lieutenant of the Amethyst to the rank of Commander has been already notified to you. It is also my intention to place Lieutenant Payne in a staff appointment; the Purser of the Amethyst will be promoted to a ship of a higher class; I wait your nomination to promote a midshipman from the quarter-deck to the rank of Lieutenant; and if a removal to any other class of ship would be acceptable to Mr. Fair, the master, his wishes will be attended to.

'Having communicated to you His Majesty's gracious approbation of the conduct of the captain, officers, and ship's company of the Amethyst, no other praise can be at the same moment interesting to you. But I trust you will perceive by the promotions which I have proposed, that I am not insensible of the additional splendour which has been added to the naval achievements of my country by the gallant and successful encounter with a well defended and superior force of the enemy in the capture of La Thétis.

'I have the honour to be, with great esteem, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

MULGRAVE.'

The sentiments expressed in this letter could not fail to be highly gratifying to Captain Seymour. The Medal was to him the more valuable from this being the *first* instance in which it had been bestowed on any officer *for a frigate action*; and it would have been difficult for the Admiralty to have expressed their opinion of Captain Seymour's conduct in any more signal way than by recommending His Majesty to bestow on him this badge of honour, hitherto associated only with the most important naval achievements. The intentions also which Earl Mulgrave expressed towards his officers were extremely satisfactory to him; he was well aware how much he was indebted for his victory to the zeal and courage with which they and his brave seamen had seconded his own efforts, and this recognition of their claims afforded him the sincerest pleasure.

The following letter from Lord Gambier, the Admiral in command on the Plymouth station, does no less honour to the noble writer himself than it does to the Captain of the Amethyst:—

'Caledonia in Torbay, November 22.

'Dear Sir,—I have deferred from day to day to congratulate you on your success in your action with the French frigate Thétis, in the expectation of receiving your letter giving me an account of it; I shall not delay any longer to rejoice with you and give thanks to the Almighty, that He was pleased to favour you so much in the battle, and to give you the victory after so severe a contest; a more so seldom has occurred. I cannot

sufficiently express my admiration of so much zeal, skill, bravery and perseverance shewn by yourself and the officers and company of the Amethyst. But we must not forget, Who it is that gives us the ability to contend with our enemies, and gives the victory; I therefore hope, if you have not already done so, that you will take the earliest opportunity when all your people return on board, to assemble them, and read the Thanksgiving after a Victory, and other suitable thanksgivings and Psalms: then may we hope for the continuance of the protection of the Almighty upon you, and that He will give you new proofs of His favour by your preservation in future. Earnestly wishing you this and all other blessings of time and eternity, I remain, dear Sir, your sincere friend and humble servant,

'GAMBIER.'

Among other public testimonies to the brilliancy of his conduct in the late engagement, Captain Seymour received information that the Committee of the Patriotic Fund at Lloyd's had voted him the sum of 100*l.* for the purchase of either a sword or a piece of plate commemorative of his victory—and also in smaller sums to those officers, seamen, and marines, who had been wounded, 625*l.*

The Corporation of the city of Limerick (Limerick his native county) voted him the freedom of that city, in a heart-of-oak box, lined and ornamented with gold; and he also received the freedom of the city of Cork, in a silver box, 'for his very great gallantry and ability in

the capture of the Thétis.' These last tributes must have been peculiarly gratifying to the heart of an Irish man.

Towards the end of November Captain Seymour pro ceeded to London, where he received from Earl Mulgrave the promised Medal, as well as a confirmation of all which had been previously expressed to him by letter. His business completed, he returned to Plymouth, and hastened to refit the Amethyst for sea. In this way he was occupied for several weeks, her requisite repairs being very considerable, and many additional officers and men being needed to restore her perfect complement. He does not appear to have sailed from Plymouth before February 8. The circumstances under which he then put to sea are detailed in the following letter to his friend and relative Captain Hawker :—

'Amethyst, at anchor with Emerald, off the Chapiron Light,
'Saturday, March 4, 1809.

'My dear Edward,—Of "Naval Story," concerning our movements, and the prize ship's arriving here, I can give you a detail not uninteresting to a friend, though tedious to an indifferent person. I sailed on February 8 with Admiral Stopford on board, his furniture, stock, band, secretary, flag, and one other Lieutenant, Captain of Marines, Chaplain, twelve midshipmen, two mates, his gig's crew, servants, &c. &c., stores also for the ships here, Cæsar, Donegal, and Defiance, and sixty-three super-numeraries on board from Plymouth Sound, with forty-eight also of my own crew in the sick list, an entire raw

crew of marines, the old having been promoted and cut up, and badly replaced, and lastly with a fair easterly wind, as that night it blew heavy; next day, off Ushant, it came to the southward and blew strong, and on it's nearing westward, wearing, and pushing to get round Saints for my passage to this station, I first heard from my amiable excellent Admiral that he meant to call at Glenans to give the L'Orient Squadron, which are all on this side Penmarck's under his command, some orders. I pushed for Glenans, in a heavy gale, and as we hourly expected to make the land, it came as thick as mustard, and blew tremendously, on which we hauled off, wind WSW. under reefed courses, and on its clearing in an hour saw Glenans and Penmarck's, but the pilot thought too late to run in before dark. That night very bad weather. Bullocks also on the main-deck, in addition to the above; next day stood in, but so thick and heavy a gale could not run, though tried it three times on clearing a little, so at night gave it up, and ran to round the Roches Bonnes, under reefed courses, and close reefed two top-sails, with new rigging, and terrible sea; next morning a clear strong gale, bore up and made the Banche Vertes breakers close to us, the men at the mast-heads not having reported them, so many heavy seas in motion not distinguishing them, we hauled round off, and sounded thirty-four fathoms; but before we saw the breakers (three heavy ones), we had some tremendous, unusual tumbling seas and then the breakers a musket-shot from us, not more. Having passed clear, we soon after saw the immense breakers of the Roches

Bonnes, and taking our departure, ran for Pentuir Breton, where we hoped to find the Commodore Hotham, with Defiance, Cæsar, and Donegal, with L'Aigle, Naiad, and Alcmene, which we did not. Three days we lay there till the weather moderated, having had a good set up, and got six inches of the standing port of our lower rigging, and found, on getting off Chapiron, the above squadron, except L'Aigle, in Basques Roads, when I put my Admiral &c. &c. on board their respective ships with great satisfaction, though the Admiral, who is a perfect gentleman, put up with a be-devilled ship very kindly, for I did my best to please him. L'Aigle, unfortunately, was sent some days before off Bordeaux, where I was to have gone; but as the enemy were the same force, and we a frigate less, I was to remain till she returned, losing by it the best part of the winter. Surcoup in Semillante, and two other French East Indiamen, expected hourly from Mauritius. After some days, we came out, anchoring off here, and the wind being northerly and easterly, I was sent, as Emerald was joining, to look out NNW., when same evening, at eight, looking round with my night-glass I saw a sail and afterwards several. I closed with the first brig, but seeing the others larger, made the night signals, and alarmed the squadron, which weighed; and I pushed to acquaint great Cæsar, and gave chase to the strangers, who kept their wind for Balcine and Ars shore. At Isle d'Aix were Warsaw, 84, Patriote, 74, Jemappe, 74, Calcutta, 60, and Pallas and Ellene, 44 each. We are Cæsar, Defiance, Donegal, Naiad, Emerald, and Amethyst. Light winds all

night of Thursday, February 23. As day broke Emerald and I close up with sternmost, Naiad and squadron to leeward, the wind ENE. and freshening, and found the strangers to be a three-decker, seven two-deckers, and two frigates from Brest, which stood in, only one being obliged to make a tack, and waiting for the ships from Isle d'Aix, kept lying to in Basques Roads, which we only left two days before, and had thereby a *lucky escape.* 24th. About nine A.M. just after Naiad was ordered by signal to the Commander-in-Chief off Ushant, three sail came in sight NNW., which were chased, and driven on shore, and fired into by the Cæsar, Defiance, and Donegal, and proved to be the Italienne, Furieux, and Calypso, 44-gun frigates, from L'Orient, coming to join the others here. This was on Friday, the 24th, at Olonne they were forced on shore and are wrecked, forced to unload and haul into the pier, dismasted and dry at low water. The Amelia and Dotterel brig had been dogging them from L'Orient, and to leeward while they were chased four sail of the line were seen, which proved to be our L'Orient ships, and they joined us. Emerald and I were watching the ships in Basques Roads, which, hearing the cannonade, came down a few miles, but seeing more ships joining, went back, and being joined by the Isle d'Aix ships, they all, eleven of the line, four frigates, and the Calcutta, though a fine NE. wind, in Basques Roads, Saturday 25th, they remained sending the frigates and two 80's to reconnoitre, but they did not do it with effect; and they went the next day, Sunday, *all* to Isle d'Aix, close in, afraid of us, seven of

the line, four frigates Alcmene having rejoined and Indefatigable. One of their 80's got aground on Les Palles, the shoal off Isle Madame, and is wholly wrecked, on her broadside, with all her masts gone. Next day by a cutter we heard our fleet sailed Monday 20th, from Torbay, with light wind, five three-deckers and four two-deckers; same day having left Brest, Shannon watching saw them come out and go through Passage du Ray, whence they went off L'Orient, and waited all Tuesday, but the wind being scant the ships could not get out, and they pushed on here. The three of the line at L'Orient and two remaining frigates which could not squeeze out when Italienne and her consorts did, are *since sailed*, as we sent to see, and we hourly expect them here, but as they will hear of us here, and can go clear to the West Indies for *they all have flour* in, probably they are gone on. Of Lord Gambier no tidings whatever since the day he sailed, and we hourly look for ships from Portsmouth and Plymouth. Poor Amethyst, instead of getting the East Indiamen off Bordeaux, has the post of honour close in at anchor and daily reconnoitring in turn with Emerald. We were very near their frigates the other day, when they attempted to reconnoitre us, but hauling the main tack down made them move back, and Cæsar thought we were boyish enough to attack them, but the Admiral was much pleased to see us keep them at bay.

'They have made a pretty cruise of it, lost an 80-gun ship by slovenliness, and suffered a very small force almost.

in sight, in hearing and in sight of their signals on shore of it, to destroy three frigates, two of them quite new, and Admiral Stopford deserves great credit indeed. By Emerald I heard of dearest Jane and my darling children, all quite well. Blessed be Providence for all things.

'I was told by Sir Richard B—— I was to have the best thing going, but I have asked nothing. We are getting in trim again, and I trust may do as well as our neighbours. I'm to attend these fellows wherever they go. Believe me &c.,

'MICHAEL SEYMOUR.'

'Enemy wait for the L'Orient ships we think, though they are four, we'll stop their entry here—which I hope we shall. M. S.'

In this letter Captain Seymour describes his present service as 'the post of honour,' as distinguished from cruising-ground, on which there was more opportunity of making prize-money by the capture of merchant vessels. We shall see now how far his words were verified.

On April 5, the Amethyst was cruising in company with the Emerald, Captain (the late) Sir Frederick Lewis Maitland, K.C.B., the Cordouan Lighthouse bearing about E. by N. 42 leagues distant, and standing on the larboard tack with the wind at east, when at 11 A.M. a ship was discovered SE. by E. steering to the westward; but, on her making out the frigates, she hauled up to the S. by E. wind. All sail was immediately made in chase;

and at noon she was half top-sails down from the deck of the Amethyst, bearing E. by E. The evident superiority of the sailing of the chase made it a difficult matter for her pursuers to approach her, at sunset her taffrail could only be seen, from the Amethyst's main rigging, a point and a half, on the weather, or larboard bow. At 7.20 P.M. it was getting dark, and both the Emerald, now astern of the Amethyst, as well as the chase, were lost sight of.

Considerable judgment was now required to decide on the probable direction, most likely to ensure the Amethyst's falling in with the stranger; and after a careful examination of the chart, and a reference to the course she had been going when discovered, with the probability of her resuming it when free from her pursuers, Captain Seymour decided on shaping such a course, as, allowing for the sailing of the two ships, would bring them together, at the nearest possible angle. The success of this arrangement was most complete, for at 9.40 A.M., steering SW., the wind fresh, and squally from the ENE., the Amethyst discovered the ship she was in search of on her weather beam, going as was conjectured, to the westward; she instantly wore to the southward, and made all sail with the wind on her larboard-quarter, closely pursued by the Amethyst, who made the private signal without receiving any answer. At 11.30 A.M. the Amethyst had approached her chase sufficiently near to commence firing her bow chase guns, which were without delay replied to by the stranger, and a running fight began which continued

until the Amethyst, at 1.15 A.M., closed upon her antagonist's larboard quarter, and opened her starboard broadside. The enemy, after returning her larboard guns, wore round on the starboard tack, and steered to the NW.-ward. This movement was immediately followed by the Amethyst, who, in consequence of some damage which

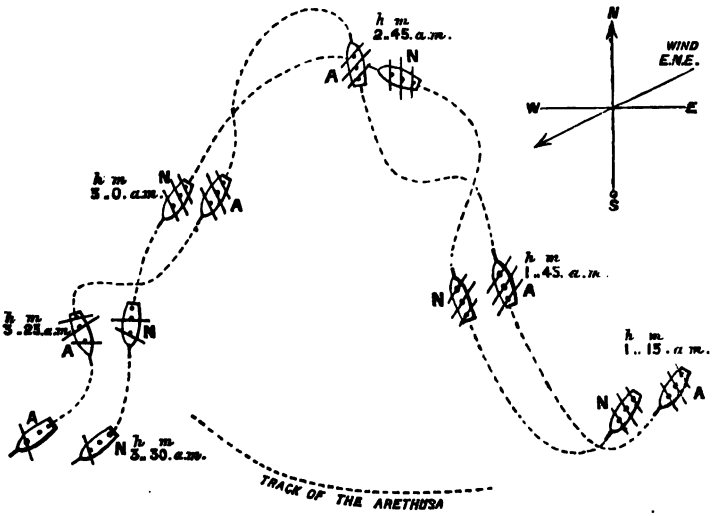

DIAGRAM OF ACTION BETWEEN AMETHYST AND NIEMEN.

the stranger's rigging and sails had received, was again able at 1.45 A.M. to range close alongside her to windward: after exchanging broadsides, the Amethyst passed ahead of the enemy, bore round up, gave her a raking broadside, and came to on the same tack to leeward. At 2.45 A.M. the enemy ran the Amethyst on board on her starboard quarter, but on clearing, bore away SW. At about 3 A.M., the Amethyst having crossed, got upon

the larboard, and weather-beam of her antagonist, and the action was again commenced. The enemy's main top-mast and mizen-mast were now shot away, and her larboard hammock netting was observed to be on fire, her guns had also become nearly silent. The Amethyst continued her fire until about 3.25 A.M., when finding that the enemy's guns had ceased firing, and her light been hauled down, the contest was considered at an end.

The stranger's main-mast now fell, and the Amethyst bore up, passed under her stern, but in bringing to on her lee quarter with her main-yard-square, her main-mast fell, carrying the mizen-mast with it, the wreck of both going over the lee quarter. At this moment a strange sail was seen approaching, which proved on exchange of signals to be the Arethusa, Captain Robert Mends. The enemy now again showed her light, fired a shot at the Arethusa, and one at the Amethyst. The former returned a bow-shot—on which the enemy, who had ceased firing, lowered her light twice, and kept it down. She proved to be Le Niemen, French 46-gun frigate, Captain Jean Henri Joseph Dupotet, two days from Verdun Roads, with six months' provisions, and a quantity of naval stores on board, bound to the Isle of France: her armament was the same as that of La Thétis, with the addition of 2 thirty-six-pounder carronades, making her total number of guns 46. The hull of the French frigate had been a good deal cut up, and her remaining mast so crippled that it fell on the day succeeding her capture. Her crew when the action commenced consisted of 339 men and boys, of whom she lost 47 killed and 73 wounded.

The Amethyst's crew when the engagement began numbered only 222 men and boys, as two of her Lieutenants and 37 men were absent in prizes, prisoners from which she had on board to the number of 69; her killed amounted to 8, and the wounded to 37, including the first and second Lieutenants of marines and boatswain. Le Niemen, being only nine months old and a remarkably fine frigate, became a valuable acquisition to the British Navy, in which, under her French name, she classed the same as the Amethyst's former prize La Thétis. It is to be regretted that a third party came to interrupt, however late, the finale of this meeting; nevertheless, it is clear enough that the Amethyst had beaten her antagonist before the arrival of the Arethusa, but the temptation to the French Captain to help his report to his Government by being able to attribute his capture to the united force of two British frigates was sufficient to cause him to rehoist his light, and induce the Arethusa to fire at him. The following letter having immediate reference to the encounter; with Captain Seymour's report, transmitted by Vice-Admiral Young, we give at length.

Copy of a Letter to Lord Gambier, transmitted by Vice-Admiral Young.

'Amethyst, off Ushant, April 12, 1809.

'My Lord,—I have very sincere pleasure in acquainting you of the capture of Le Niemen, a fine French frigate, of 44 guns, 28 of which are 18-pounders on the main deck,

and 319 men, copper fastened, two days from Verdun Roads, with six months' provisions and naval stores on board, and bound to the Isle of France, commanded by Mons. Dupotet, Capitaine de Frégate, a distinguished officer, who defended his ship with great ability and resolution.—At 11 in the forenoon of the 5th inst., the wind at East, Emerald North, within signal distance, Cordovan bearing E. by N. 42 leagues, a ship was perceived in the SE. coming down, steering to the Westward; which hauled to the SSE. on making us out. She was immediately chased, but at 20 minutes past 7 we lost sight of her and the Emerald, and had not gained on the chase.—After dark, the Amethyst's course was shaped to meet the probable route of an enemy, which, at half-past 6, we crossed one, but though within half gun-shot at 11, from which time, till one, the bow and the stern chasers were exchanging, her extraordinary sailing prevented our effecting anything serious. From one till past three A. M. on the 6th, the action was severe, after which, the enemy's main and mizen masts fell, his fire became faint, was just silenced, while ours continued as lively as ever, when the Arethusa appeared, and on her firing, he immediately made a signal of having surrendered, and proved to be the same frigate recommended to my notice in your Lordship's order of the 9th ult. She fell on board us once in the contest; she had 47 killed and 73 wounded. The main and mizen masts of the Amethyst fell at the close of the action, and she had 8 killed and 37 wounded.

'To render just praise to the brave and admirable con-

duct of every officer and man of this ship's company (of whom 2 officers and 37 men were absent in prizes, the prisoners from which, 69, were on board), I am perfectly unequal. The great exertions and experience of the first Lieutenant, Mr. William Hill, and Mr. Robert Fair, the master, I am particularly indebted for. Lieutenants Waring and Prytherch, of the Royal Marines, deserve my best thanks. The prize's foremast fell next day, and I left her in tow of the Arethusa, who afforded us in every instance the most prompt assistance, and by Captain Mends' desire I write.

'In justice to a most vigilant officer, I have to observe, that from the Emerald's situation, even Captain Maitland's skill would not avail him in getting up to the enemy, and the darkness and squally weather in the early part of the night precluded all hope of his keeping sight of the Amethyst.—I have the honour to be, &c.

'M. SEYMOUR.

'Right Honourable Lord Gambier, &c. &c.'

'Arethusa, April 7, 1809.

'My dear Seymour,—With this I send you a proposed copy of my letter to Captain Adam on the fortunate capture of Le Niemen, leaving to you to explain in your own way all that you have so meritoriously accomplished; I have, as you will perceive, disclaimed anything beyond merely firing a few shot at the close of a battle in which I bore no part. Should anything occur to you which you

would like me to mention, pencil it on the draft of my letter, and return it to me, and I will do as you wish.

'I have this morning sent on board a boat and 15 more seamen to fish her foremast which is badly wounded and get up a jury foretop-mast, which I perceive they are about. I apprehend she has had a great many men killed, as a number of bodies were thrown overboard by our people. I sincerely hope your wounded are likely to do well; all those on board the Niemen were properly taken care of by their own surgeons, who were kept for that purpose.

'I have just seen the great misfortune of the loss of her foremast, as soon therefore as you can spare some carpenters to help her, so much the better.

'I caught a cold yesterday, which makes me afraid to show my head on deck to-day.

'I wish to have my surgeon on board as soon as he can be spared.

'Should a ship of force come in sight, having the appearance of an enemy, I shall be under the necessity of withdrawing my people for the time being from the prize, you may, however, depend on my sticking close by you both. This moment I am informed of the stream-cable having parted, one would think this a little vexatious, but who knows what good fortune it might be the parent of. Adieu for the present,

'R. MENDS.'

'His Majesty's Ship Arethusa, off St. Sebastian's.
April 6, 1809.

'Sir,—I have the extreme satisfaction of acquainting you, for the information of the Right Honourable Lord Gambier, the Commander-in-chief, that last night about one o'clock we observed a considerable firing to leeward, evidently of ships engaging, which continued till past four, when we arrived up and found them to be two frigates, each with only her foremast standing. The action having nearly ceased, left nothing for the Arethusa to do, but to fire a few shot, when the enemy hoisted a light as a signal of having struck. On the return of the boat, I found the English frigate to be the Amethyst, Captain Seymour, who with his usual good fortune, zeal and ability, had followed his chase, though a dark night, beaten him, and needed not the aid of a friend to complete his conquest. The French frigate proves to be Le Niemen, of 44 guns, from Bordeaux, bound to the Isle of France, and perfectly new.

'In justice to Monsieur Dupotet her gallant captain, I must say that he fought his ship extremely well. Further particulars of the action will be communicated to his Lordship by Captain Seymour. I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) 'R. MENDS.

'To Charles Adams, Esq., Captain of His Majesty's ship Resistance.'

'Amethyst, off the Saints, April 11, 1839.

'Dear Edward,—You will believe, I was much gratified with your letter from Bermuda, and glad you had been in

the way of capturing a brig: no one can wish more sincerely than I do that it was La Vénus, with her coffee and cotton and the 44 guns which all the gentlemen now carry. You will be rejoiced to hear that Amethyst is in the habit of seeing and thrashing French frigates, though not of getting them to herself. The public papers will tell you all about it, and the flying Niemen, which is the fastest sailer I ever met with, and only the old luck, and keeping large after dark, after losing sight of her, and being beaten to pieces by the wind by her, and an admirable look out by Fair (the present Captain Fair), who is a great treasure to me, gave us the view of him. We believe she had struck before Arethusa came up, but as she showed her light again, and fired a shot at her, I do not like to reflect on a very brave fellow who held out above half-an-hour after his officers said it was entirely useless, and during which our fire was as good as ever, and his very faint, only a gun now and then. When she was on board on the starboard quarter, he called and directed "Abordage!" but the folks did not move: if they had, we should have dished them sooner, for we were most thoroughly prepared for it, and our fellows were very active.

'I wrote you a long history of the Amethyst and the French squadron from Brest, since which, on Lord Gambier's joining, Stopford was pleased to speak handsomely of Amethyst and Emerald, and he gave us *one month's cruise*. . . . . I met ill-sailing Naiad at sea, on my own very ground, with the same orders to intercept

the Bordeaux frigate, and cruise as long as *her water and provisions would last*, and then replenish at Plymouth, and join him, so without going to the fleet at all a complete cruise to the Acting Captain—a very good fellow I believe, but hard upon the Emerald, and all the old blockading frigates, and me, I think, all things considered, who never got a cruise as an Acting Captain. We hear "T. C." has been beaten off by a French frigate in the West, and "P." taken by two frigates in Mediterranean, a surprise in the night off Toulon, which port she was watching.

'In company with Maitland, who is the best cruiser I ever met with, we have taken La Patrie, a most beautiful copper-bottomed ship, on the model of the French famous Bellone (a privateer they had), of 560 tons, five weeks off the stocks, with a valuable cargo, bound to the Isle of France, a letter of marque, and pierced for twenty-two guns. Le Serpent, a ship of 230 tons, letter of marque, coppered, with provisions from Bayonne to the Island of Guadaloupe. La Caroline, a perfectly new beautiful brig of 180 tons, coppered, same cargo from same port to same island. La Vanturier, schooner, letter of marque, coppered, 100 tons, also similar cargo from and to same places. So now with Le Niemen, our *one month* has turned out pretty well, she is copper-fastened, and admirably built in every point. I am now under the greatest anxiety for a change of wind, it being foul, to get the poor wounded to Plymouth, and hope I may arrive in the night, or a calm, to send and apprize my dearest wife. I forgot to tell you Admiral B.'s compliment to me on meeting

him in town at the Admiralty, after saying much that was kind—"You are always falling on your legs." I left Le Niemen, wholly dismasted, in tow of Arethusa, with my first Lieutenant, Hill, a Chudleigh good man, on board, by Mends' wish, and he sent me the Captain's, and would not take his sword, nor do I care about it. I believe I told you of Sir R. B. telling me I certainly when ready would have the best thing going, and M—— also, but that was all I heard of it, and am aware Providence has been my best friend, alas too undeservedly.

'*Plymouth, April* 23.—I got here the 15th, Niemen not yet arrived.—I have a most handsome letter as follows from Lord Mulgrave:

'"My dear Sir,—Most cordially do I congratulate you on your success. The repetition of such brilliant, able, and successful service, within so short a period after your late capture, has been reserved for you almost without example. I shall be most ready to attend to your wishes, as on the former occasion, in everything that relates to the promotion of your officers. I have not yet had an opportunity of transmitting your dispatch (which arrived this morning) to the King, but his Majesty, who favourably appreciates the zealous services of his officers, cannot fail to be highly gratified by this second splendid action of the Amethyst. I am, dear Sir, with the greatest esteem, yours sincerely,

'"MULGRAVE."

'The first Lieutenant Hill is a Commander. Niemen from N. and NNE. and NNW. winds not yet in port, but

has been seen with Arethusa, all well. Dearest Jane, and all the flock well. Amethyst by the same hulk as five months ago, and to-morrow going to take out the old foremast, and the main and mizen stumps, and get in new main and mizen masts, Bible pieces are putting in, and though the decks are so thin, the carronade trucks went through the forecastle and quarter-deck, they only put oak plank underneath them. She is rickety aloft, but tight, and sound below.

'All my friends in town are anxious for me to go up; but I decline, as the Admiralty have been very civil, and have done all I have asked, except making Fair from November 10 last as I wished him 2nd, but will make him as before promised at the Texel affair, on his time being up, and passing, so these two occasions will stand in his favour I trust towards future rank. We have just received accounts from Basques Roads, Warsovie 90 on two decks, Tonnerre and Aguilon, 74's, burnt after being in possession, Calcutta full of military stores, &c. and Indian frigate also burnt and the others with guns thrown over, &c. The Gazette Extraordinary will give particulars. 600 prisoners taken. Lord Cochrane and Maitland in Emerald and Impérieuse had the most of it, and did the service on the ships aground.

'*April* 24.—This day's post has brought me another letter from Lord Mulgrave:

'"Admiralty, April 22, 1809.

'"Dear Sir,—I have the greatest satisfaction in acquainting you, that His Majesty, highly approving your

distinguished gallantry and conduct in the two brilliant and successful actions which have added to the British Navy two frigates of superior force to that which you command, has been graciously pleased to create you a Baronet of the United Kingdom.—I am, dear Sir, with the greatest esteem and regard, your most obedient and faithful servant,

'"MULGRAVE."

'So I am, you see, right in not going to town to beg—pressed as I have been by so many to do so. To one in particular, I was compelled to reply, and truly said, that I went the last time "to do justice to an excellent set of officers and men, and now by letter, and promotion the Admiralty have done everything I could expect, I then did not ask anything, and have no idea of going to beg, and perhaps be disappointed."

'I have written my best thanks, and shall be off on leave to give personal thanks to my gracious Sovereign, and pay my fees (400*l.*) I hear, by return of post on my leave coming down. Believe me &c. &c. &c.

'M. SEYMOUR.'

The repairs of the Amethyst and her preparations for active service were proceeding rapidly, when they were hastened by a dispatch from the Admiralty containing sealed instructions with which Sir Michael was to sail without delay. He was on the eve of sailing, when he was disappointed by receiving another dispatch directing him to return his secret orders, and to sail for the Downs : thence

he was ordered to the coast of Holland; from which he returned, after a six weeks' cruise, to the Downs, where the Amethyst was selected by Admiral Sir Richard Strachan as his flag-ship, until they joined the St. Domingo, then off Flushing.

The following letter (to Captain Hawker) details these changes; the notices, which it also contains of his family and private affairs, his prospects and his wishes, are of a very interesting character; and expressed, as they are, with the undisguised freedom and affectionate warmth of one writing to a friend and relative on whose sympathies he could rely, they convey a very lively impression of his feelings as a Husband and a Parent.

'Amethyst, Downs: July 23, 1809.

'With Sir R. J. Strachan's flag on board.

'My dear Edward,—You may suppose I was infinitely gratified by getting inclosed yesterday and the day before, your letters from your dearest sister, who enjoins me strictly to write to you, though hurried and worried to death with the strange accumulation of this expedition intended against the "Scheldt," shipping &c. &c. at Antwerp, all suddenly and confusedly brought together. Myself, purser, clerk, writers, &c. at work. Don't conclude that I have not always sincere pleasure in writing to you, though I say, dearest Jane has enjoined me, notwithstanding my bustle.

'Amethyst was sent from Plymouth, where I was sadly hurried, and to have sailed on a secret expedition,

the 21st of May last, to the Downs, having by directions of the Admiralty returned my most secret orders, and come with twenty-two weeks' provisions to this horrible place. Thence to off Flushing, thence off Texel for six weeks, thence here to join *grand* expedition. I take Sir R. Strachan to the St. Domingo off Flushing, and his Secretaries, Peter Paget, Captain R.N., &c. &c. I have no troops in, mine having been withdrawn again; and indeed I hear I am to have some sloops, brigs, bombs, &c. to myself on some business, but I have no wish this way but to get Westward. 'Tis now an Easterly wind; the ships from Portsmouth are hourly expected when the wind veers; and then Lord Gambier's trial goes on there. The papers will detail to you this business. I have many affectionate thanks to offer you, my dear Edward, for the friendly effusions of your heart and pen, and hope to tell you at Plymouth by the fireside many things which I have omitted in correspondence. Honours I hope will not lessen our friendship, but strengthen it.

'As to our last frigate, she will fetch from 14*l.* to 14*l.* 10*s.* a ton; she is not much cut up in hull: Stores, &c. will *altogether* bring 30,000*l.* exclusive of head-money. But Arethusa and Emerald share; the latter was a joint-chaser, but the former wants to exclude her. We have an opinion in Emerald's favour, and are interested: for if Emerald shares, she gets a third, except head-money, and if thrown out, she gets a quarter, as Emerald and Amethyst share for that month, being joint-cruizers, and except the proportion of head-money, which she may

get by agreement, she will not otherwise benefit. I hope to get 4,000*l.* or more by that month; but my expenses are enormous, and I shall be a poor miserable rascal of a Baronet, nor be able to afford the woman I most love on earth a carriage which she ought to have, for she deserves every comfort I can afford her; and I do not want the cash to hoard it, for my boys must work their way. Our girl Jane is delighted with her little sister. Jane sings well, and will be a nice girl I trust, and very good which is better.

'Yesterday we received accounts of the Austrians being defeated on the Danube, and the Archduke done up; if so, we may expect some large detachments at Antwerp. We are late, but may yet do much with good management. Knighton is gone to Spain with Marquis Wellesley on his Embassy, but returns when the mission is over, after a few months, to his house and profession in Hanover Square. He had great increasing practice, and goes as His Lordship's physician. "Papillon," you mentioned, got safe into Bordeaux, and knocked away a topmast of one of our brigs going in trying to stop her. I am promised to Westward as soon as possible, so am anxious to get this expedition over; the Bay is the best place. From Plymouth you will hear of all our dearest correspondents, and a good account of your excellent mother. Government paid my fees upon the patent, &c. of the Baronetcy, and the Admiralty I believe really intend something kind, but this expedition is a stop to me, and what I was intended for May 21 was done away. As to pension, it was not offered, and you

may believe me when I assure you I would not take it, if it was; but would say, anything in the way of regular service or situation customary for a Captain and desirable I would be thankful for. But I have no interest, and only am treated respectfully and politely by all the folks. I wish you were on the Home station, with all my heart; to call in at Plymouth every three or four months would not be disagreeable.

'I long to see you and talk over old times. *Her dearest ladyship* is, I think, better and stronger than two years ago. I love Sir John W. for his kindness and consideration to you. I'll write again very soon, my dear Edward, if I am allowed to come back from Holland.—Believe me ever your most sincere and affectionate friend,

'M. SEYMOUR.

'Don't be angry with me for saying I would not take a pension. But I am sure the middle line of life is the happiest, and moderate circumstances as to rank and state, *though I love decency and comfort.*'

Sir M. Seymour had, as appears from his letter, no great inclination to accompany this expedition to the Scheldt; nor did he anticipate any more prosperous issue to it than that which came to pass. He did not, however, remain long off the Scheldt at this time, for in the following October, he was appointed to his last prize, the Niemen, of which he returned immediately to Plymouth to take the command. He could scarcely have quitted without

regret his old frigate, in which he had met with such brilliant success: nevertheless, the superior size of the Niemen made his appointment to her a source of satisfaction and of pleasure.

The officers and crew of the Amethyst having been turned over to the Niemen, Sir M. Seymour sailed from Plymouth in November 1809, to cruise in the Bay of Biscay; where, as well as off the mouth of the English Channel and on the south coast of Ireland, he was very actively employed in the above ship until May 1812.

During this time many French and American privateers and merchant vessels were captured or detained by Sir M. Seymour; and though no action with the enemy's ships of war took place, one or two circumstances occurred not without interest. Such was the falling in with a water-logged vessel in the Bay of Biscay, which is described as follows in the 'Percy Anecdotes.'

'While the Niemen was cruising in the Bay of Biscay the wreck of a merchant vessel was fallen in with, water-logged, but being timber laden the deck was just above the water. On nearing it no one could be seen, but the watchful eye of the captain observed that the caboose had the appearance of being neatly patched with old tarpaulin, and he imagined it might have been fitted by the crew of the ill-fated vessel. It blew at this time a strong gale, but Sir Michael, listening only to the possibility of saving the life of a fellow creature, immediately ordered the ship to be hove to, and sent a boat with instructions to board the wreck, and ascertain whether there was still any one surviving.

The boat had considerable difficulty in approaching the wreck, and while endeavouring to do so, the crew were shouting as loud as they could ; an object resembling in appearance a bundle of clothes rolled out of the caboose, and fell to leeward against the shrouds of the still standing mainmast. Failing in their endeavours to board the wreck, they contrived to get hold of this object with a boat-hook, and hauled it into the boat, when it proved to be the skeleton of a man, bent head and knees together, and so wasted away as scarcely to be felt in the clothes which covered him. The boat hastened back to the frigate, and so reduced was this miserable remnant of mortality that the boy was able with his own hands to lift him up the side and into the ship ; then placed on the deck, he showed, to the great astonishment of all, signs of remaining life. He tried to move, and muttered a hollow sound, which those around him supposed to be "another." Sir Michael had already given orders for a second attempt to board the wreck, and was much displeased that it had not been before accomplished, it needed not therefore the additional incentive. The boat succeeded this time in boarding the wreck, and on looking into the caboose one other human body was discovered, wasted to the bare bones, but quite dead. He appeared to have been sitting at the moment of death in an upright posture, with a hand extended towards a tin pot, in which there was a small quantity of water. The boat's crew, having completed the melancholy survey, returned to the ship. Meanwhile every attention had been paid to preserve the generous skeleton, who

seemed to have only been for a moment sufficiently animated to articulate the word "another," and then became quite unconscious. The utmost care and attention was paid him by the captain and surgeon of the ship, who spared no pains which humanity or skill could suggest to achieve the noble object of creating anew, as it were, a fellow creature. At the end of three weeks, they had the gratification to see this skeleton walking on the deck, a well-made figure of a man nearly six feet in height. The vessel had upset in a squall twenty-one days before the Niemen fell in with her, and the master, who was the person thus providentially saved, had been able, in his memory, to keep a good account of his probable latitude and longitude each day for nineteen of the number; the last two days, however, so exhausted had he become, he had no recollection of.'

Another occurrence worthy of narration was the recapture of an American vessel that had been taken by the Niemen, and was on her way to Plymouth in charge of a prize crew, commanded by Mr. E. Saunders, mate. On Sir M. Seymour's arrival at Plymouth, after despatching this prize, one of his first questions was, 'Where is Saunders?' The reply was, 'We know nothing of him; why do you ask?' and the explanation of his non-appearance is given as follows, by the present Captain John C. Seymour, R.N., then a midshipman on board the Niemen.

'The Niemen, when cruising between Ushant and Cape Finisterre, captured, or rather detained, an American

schooner, for breach of blockade. Sir M. Seymour sent Saunders and four or five men to take her to Plymouth, leaving her captain and one man on board her. In the night, I suppose the middle watch, hearing a noise on deck, Saunders came up, and was met by the captain ; a struggle took place, both fell, and while down the mate shot Saunders and then dropped him overboard. They then ran for France, where the mate left the vessel, which was captured on her return voyage, when the captain was tried and acquitted. I afterwards met the captain, who told me what I have stated, and added further that he would rather have lost his right arm than have poor Saunders [1] shot, but that it was the act of the mate.

A similar attempt at a rescue was made on board another American schooner, the Abigail, also sent into Plymouth by the Niemen ; but was frustrated by the resolution of the midshipman, Mr. Chalmers, in charge of her.

In May 1812, Sir M. Seymour took the command of the Hannibal, 74 guns, on his old station the Channel. It is curious that up to the time of his leaving the Hannibal, when he had completed twenty-six years' active service at sea, with the exception of one month off Newfoundland, and two years in Jamaica as midshipman, and the subsequent expedition to the West Indies in

[1] Mr. Edward Saunders was a remarkably fine young man, of high character. He was the son of Morley Saunders, Esq., J.P., of Saunders Grove, in the county of Wicklow.

the Hannibal, the whole of his time had been passed in the Channel; a life of rough and hard work, when we consider that England was at war the greater part of that time, and that ships were continually at sea. Sir Michael's brother officers used to say of him, that he knew every tide and current, and every inch of the coast, better than any Channel pilot. He used, as of old in the Spitfire, to run close in to the French coast on the darkest nights, and often to board the French fishing boats and glean from them what news he could of the vessels in the French ports; and how his activity was rewarded, his two victories over the Thétis and the Niemen, and the privateers and other prizes he captured, sufficiently attest.

In the Hannibal, Sir Michael had no repetition of his exciting and successful command in the Amethyst; but on March 26, 1814, he captured the Sultane. He was cruising off St. Malo, in company with the Hebrus frigate, Captain Palmer, and the 16-gun brig Sparrow, Captain Lock, when he fell in with the Sultane and Etoile frigates, on their homeward voyage.

These two French frigates had on January 23, while cruising off the Cape de Verd Islands, encountered the English frigates Astrea, Captain Eveleigh, and Creole, Captain Mackenzie, of as nearly as possible the same force as themselves, and had fought a very fierce action for nearly three hours, when they separated, all four ships very much disabled, and Captain Eveleigh killed.

The following is a copy of Sir Michael Seymour's letter

to Admiral Sir Richard Bickerton, acquainting him with the capture :—

'H.M.S. Hannibal, at sea, March 27, 1814.

'Sir,—I have the pleasure to acquaint you of the capture of La Sultane, French frigate of 44 guns, and 330 men, at a quarter past 3 P.M. yesterday, after an ineffectual endeavour to disable this ship. When spread on the look-out from the Hebrus, at 10 A.M., Isle de Bas SE. 12 leagues, with a light breeze from the SW., it came very thick weather, and guns were heard in the NNE.; and on its clearing up, proceeding under all sail, I found the Hebrus near me, the Sparrow in the NW., and the two enemy's frigates E. and N., five or six miles distant, one with jury topmasts and sails, and the other with double-reefed topsails, apparently having suffered from tempest or action. We neared them fast, but on the wind changing at 11 to the NNW., very fresh, we hauled SE., and the other E. by N., and I directed Hebrus, as the best sailing ship, and the Sparrow, to pursue the seemingly most perfect frigate, and I lost sight of them, going about ten knots, at 2 P.M., when the Hebrus was closing the enemy very fast, and afterwards, about 3, four guns were heard.

'The other ship is L'Etoile, which, with La Sultane, lost each twenty killed and about thirty wounded, in action with the Creole and the Astrea, off Isle of Mayo, two months since; and each had 350 men on sailing from the Loire.

'I have given charge of the prize to Lieutenant Crouch, an able officer who has served many years with me, and

'I have the honour to be,

'Sir, your obedient servant,

'M. SEYMOUR.

'To Sir Richard Bickerton, Bart.,
'Commander in Chief,
'Portsmouth.'

To the few words in which this letter reports the capture of the Sultane, it may suffice to add that, on the departure of the Hebrus and the Sparrow in their pursuit, the Hannibal lost no time in following the larger ship. The Frenchman, notwithstanding the damage he had received, sailed well; and the Hannibal was not reckoned a fast sailer, but by crowding canvas and making the best of her powers, she was able after a few hours to get within gunshot of her chase; when, after the exchange of a few shots, the enemy hauled down her flag and surrendered. His son, the present Sir Michael Seymour (then a boy of eleven years of age, taking his first cruise to test his love of the service), well remembers the ardour with which the captain of the Hannibal entered on the chase, taking upon himself the office of first lieutenant as well as captain, and himself giving every order; and the courtesy and attention with which later in the day he received on board his ship the gallant captain of the Sultane, who had previously so highly distinguished himself in escaping capture after a well-fought action with a British frigate.

After the Hebrus and the Sparrow[1] had been lost sight of by the Hannibal, the Etoile led the Hebrus a chase of fifteen hours, during which she ran 120 miles, before Captain Palmer could bring her to action in La Hogue Bay. To prevent her escape, he passed between her and the shore, though within musket-shot of the land, and under the fire of a land battery. The well-directed fire of the French soon shot away his fore topmast and foreyard, crippled his mainmast and bowsprit, and cut to pieces almost every shroud, stay, and brace in the ship; but such resources of seamanship did he display that the damage did not interfere with the action, and he soon reduced his antagonist to a more unmanageable condition than his own; and after an almost ceaseless cannonade of more than two hours, the Etoile struck, after an action maintained most honourably on both sides. The Sultane made the seventh, and the Etoile the eighth French frigate captured, out of ten which had ventured to sea, and had cruised with some considerable success. The Terpsichore, taken afterwards by the Majestic, making nine of the whole number.

In the summer of 1814, the Hannibal, in company with two frigates and two brigs, was ordered to convoy a large outward-bound fleet of merchant ships to the West Indies. The convoy consisted of seventy-three sail. On June 15 Sir Michael reached Barbadoes. He had scarcely arrived there, before he began to feel the effects of the climate. His constitution had always shown itself peculiarly susceptible

[1] See Yonge's 'History of the British Navy,' vol. ii.

of injury from extreme heat. As a midshipman on this station in 1785, he had been compelled by ill health to return to England; and now, on his return to the same station thirty years later in life, he was seized with a very dangerous illness. He would probably have been obliged to leave a climate so pernicious to him, and to return to England, had he not been ordered home with a large convoy of 180 sail, with which he sailed on July 4, reaching England on August 12. The abdication of Napoleon in the month of April had led to a cessation of hostilities, which had so long raged between this country and France. Measures for the reduction of our large Navy were immediately adopted, and the Hannibal was paid off in the month of September, 1814.

Having paid off his ship, Sir M. Seymour retired to Coombe Royal, an extremely pretty place of moderate size, one mile from Kingsbridge. This place was the property of John Luscombe, Esq., who had married a younger sister of Lady Seymour. Sir Michael's family, his children being now ten in number, had outgrown his house at Plymouth, and early in 1814 he had sold it to Thomas B. Bewes, Esq. (afterwards M.P. for Plymouth). He had thoughts of purchasing a place in the country; and until he could find one to suit him, became his brother-in-law's tenant at Coombe Royal, which was situated at a convenient distance from Plymouth. After eight years' constant service, Sir Michael was probably not reluctant to retire for a season to the enjoyments of domestic life.

Towards the close of the year, measures were adopted

by H.R.H. the Prince Regent, acting in behalf of his Royal Father, for 'commemorating the auspicious termination of the long and arduous contests in which this empire had been engaged, and of marking in an especial manner his gracious sense of the valour, perseverance, and devotion manifested by the officers of His Majesty's forces, by sea and land;' with this view His Royal Highness was pleased to extend the limits of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath, 'to the end that those officers who had had the opportunities of signalizing themselves by eminent services during the late war might share in the honours of the said Order, and that their names might be delivered down to remote posterity, accompanied by the marks of distinction which they had so nobly earned.'

So ran the Supplement to the *London Gazette* of January 3, 1815,—a Gazette which must have gladdened the heart of many a brave soldier and sailor by its public recognition of the good services which they had rendered to their country. The Order of the Bath, which consisted previously of 'Knights Companions' only, was henceforth to be extended to three classes: the first, entitled 'Knights Grand Crosses,' to which none were eligible who had not attained the rank of Rear-Admiral in the Navy or Major-General in the Army (twelve civilians only excepted); the second class, entitled 'Knights Commanders,' to which none were eligible who had not attained the rank of Post-Captain in the Navy or Lieutenant-Colonel in the Army; the third, styled 'Companions of the Bath.' The name of Sir Michael Seymour appeared among the Knights

Commanders, a gratifying mark to him of the estimation in which his services were held. A letter was at the same time received by him from the Secretary to the Order, desiring him to prepare a statement of his services, to be placed among the records of the Order, together with his pedigree and arms, in order that an Escutcheon and Banner of his Arms might be placed among those of his brethren Knights in Westminster Abbey.

The escape of Napoleon from Elba in the following spring, and the rapidity with which he was surrounded by a large army, revived the prospect of war, and probably awakened Sir M. Seymour's desire to be again at sea: but the glorious result of the Battle of Waterloo speedily annihilated Napoleon's hopes, and confirmed to this country the blessings of peace. The following letter, written in August, mentions, among other things, Buonaparte's arrival in a British port on his way to St. Helena, and relates the eagerness of the English to see that extraordinary man, and even in some cases to do him honour: the letter shows that Sir Michael at least was not so far dazzled by his former power and wonderful successes as to forget the evils by which they had been sullied; while not insensible to his vast talents for the arts, as well of peace, as of war, he regarded him, as swayed from first to last by an ambition more than ordinarily selfish, and more than commonly devoid of true patriotism.

'Coombe Royal, Kingsbridge, August 6, 1815.

'My dearest Friend,—Hearing a vessel will sail for

Newfoundland to-morrow or Tuesday, I send this to assure you I regret my not having received your last to me from Torbay, until after you had sailed from thence, as it went to Plymouth, which I had left the day before, with dearest Jane and the young ones, for our home. Had I got it in time, I would have gone over and paid you a long morning visit, and returned in the evening.

'Bellerophon is gone to Portsmouth to put Buona parte on board the Northumberland, Sir George Cockburn, to be placed a prisoner at St. Helena; and then Sir George goes on to relieve Admiral Tyler at the Cape of Good Hope—and we hear, but I trust it is not true, that A. R. on Bellerophon's quarter-deck walked uncovered when the miscreant was on deck. Thousands came hundreds of miles to see him. I was at Plymouth with John, but never thought of going to do so. In short, the world seem carried away by the blaze of his character, without scrutinizing or reflecting on his atrocities. The Prince behaved well in not receiving his letter; and Government have treated him properly, as a captured General. Many ships are paying off, and a peace establishment is to commence soon. Guardships as formerly. About two months will make these arrangements. I shall go to town the end of this month to get Knighted, and receive the Badge, as they will not otherwise deliver it. M. B. writes word that O. told her that on the promotion *I* was to have the Ramilies as Guardship at Plymouth; and she supposes I know it. *I am quite ignorant in every way of it;* though I certainly should like it. I have good

accounts of all the boys at Dartford. I shall not and have not attempted anything about a residence, for I must wait to see what arrangements take place for the peace establishment. A thousand kind loves and wishes from all here, and with the pleasing prospect of our next happy meeting, I remain, dearest Edward, ever very affectionately yours,—

'M. SEYMOUR.

'Edward Hawker, Esq., H.M.S. the Salisbury,
'St. John's, Newfoundland.'

It appears from the above that Sir Michael had hopes that the coming Promotion would place him so high on the list of Captains as to entitle him to one of the Guardships, of which several were to be immediately commissioned. These hopes were for the present disappointed. But some recompense for this disappointment appeared towards the close of the year, in the following letter from the Secretary to the Board of Admiralty:—

'Admiralty, December 5, 1815.

'Mr. Croker presents his compliments to Captain Sir Michael Seymour, and informs him that directions have been given for increasing his pension of 91*l.* 5*s.* for the loss of an arm, to 300*l.* per annum, which increase is to commence from the 1st of July last, in pursuance of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent's Order in Council of the 27th of last month.

'Captain Sir Michael Seymour, Bart., K.C.B.'

This increase of income, bestowed without any solicitation on his part, could not fail to be gratifying to Sir M. Seymour; for though he had the reputation of having been not only one of the *keenest*, but also one of the most *successful*, cruisers in the late war, and was thought by his brother officers to have accumulated a large sum in prize-money, yet, as is commonly the case, they much outstepped the mark. His prizes, though very numerous, were in no single case very lucrative to him, and the profits of La Thétis and Le Niemen, especially the last, were, from various causes, much below what he might have fairly anticipated in such captures: and though, nevertheless, his prize-money was from first to last very considerable, yet when it is recollected that he started in life with nothing but his profession, and that his family had rapidly increased, and was now very numerous, no one acquainted with his generous nature will wonder that he had realized but a bare sufficiency to support his family and live in the manner which his rank rendered decent and proper. He had at this time *five* sons at school, the eldest fifteen, the youngest nine years of age, and he had of course the prospect of their education becoming every year more expensive. Mrs. Seymour, his mother, who continued to live in Ireland, had been with another sister co-heiress of a good landed property; but circumstances had occurred which made it necessary for her to part with her paternal property, retaining only a small rent-charge upon it, which would hereafter descend to Sir Michael, now her eldest son: he, however, was aware that this sum was not large; and during

his mother's life, he felt it incumbent on him to afford her some regular assistance from his own income. Thus situated, this increase in his pension could not but be very acceptable to him.

In the following summer Sir Michael, having found his present home very inconvenient for the education of his sons, determined to move nearer London. He was in search of something to purchase, but, when on a visit to a friend in Wiltshire, having seen and been pleased with Ramridge House, the seat of Henry Gawler, Esq., then seeking a tenant for it, he consented to take it for three years. Ramridge was situated in Hampshire, four miles from Andover, immediately under Weyhill, and proved a most agreeable residence. It had the advantage of being very accessible to his sons, when returning for their holidays from their several schools. The eldest was still at Winchester, the second was with a private tutor, near Salisbury; the third at the Naval College at Portsmouth; the fourth at the Military College at Woolwich; the fifth at Dr. Valpy's at Reading, from which, after a few months, he went to the Charter House, a nomination for which had been given to Sir Michael by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Some time after the close of the war, His Majesty, King William the Fourth, then Duke of Clarence, desired certain naval officers who had more particularly distinguished themselves during the war to send him written accounts of some specified actions.

Thus Sir M. Seymour was requested to furnish descriptions of his actions with the French frigates La Thétis

and Le Niemen, which he did; and in acknowledgment thereof he had the honour to receive from his Royal Highness the following letter:—

'St. James's, Wednesday afternoon, September, 1817.

'Dear Sir,—On my arrival this day, I found your letter of the 29th inst. and its two valuable enclosures, for which accept my sincere thanks; they shall be preserved, and docketed as being from the hand of the valuable and able officer, whose gallantry and abilities were so conspicuous at the captures of La Thétis and Le Niemen. I only hope in future war the same opportunity may afford, and I am certain you will equally distinguish yourself.

'My best wishes and compliments attend Lady Seymour, and ever believe me,

'Dear Sir,

'Yours most sincerely,

'WILLIAM.'

Sir Michael continued to reside at Ramridge with little intermission for two years from the period of his taking possession of it. The society of the neighbourhood was agreeable; he was fond of reading and of country pursuits, and his time was in various ways fully occupied. But as the year 1818 advanced he began to hope for employment in his profession: the Guardships which had been commissioned in 1815 would complete their three years' service in the autumn of this year; and several vacancies would be thus created: having been, as he supposed, not far from obtaining one of them in 1815, he was of course

sanguine of being appointed to one on the first vacancy. In this he was not disappointed; for, in the month of September 1818 he was appointed to command the Northumberland, a guardship at Sheerness. It was necessary that he should reside within a convenient distance of his ship; he therefore removed his family to Rochester, whence, with a good boat's crew, he could daily visit and pass some time on board his ship. His command of the Northumberland was only for a short period: a new Royal Yacht, the Prince Regent, had been for some time building at Deptford, and was launched in the spring of 1819. In the month of May Sir Michael received intimation from Lord Melville, that the Prince Regent had been pleased to nominate him for the command of this yacht, which appointment took place on August 12, 1819. The advantages of the command of a Royal Yacht over that of a Guardship consisted in its being a *permanent* appointment with higher pay. Probably this was the first step in Sir M. Seymour's naval career for which he was indebted to any influence besides that which his professional zeal and exemplary conduct had, unaided, obtained for him. His friend and brother-in-law, Sir William Knighton, had about this time been admitted to the confidence of the Prince Regent, though he had not yet been officially appointed his Private Secretary and Keeper of the Privy Purse. The Royal Yachts were in the special patronage of the Prince; and although Sir Michael's position on the Navy List was such as to give him a fair claim to the new yacht, it is probable that he was in some

degree indebted for it to the assistance of Sir William Knighton.

The society of many naval and military officers and their families had made Rochester a pleasant residence to Sir Michael and Lady Seymour; to which must be added, the friendly terms on which they lived with the late amiable Sir John Gore, who at this time was the Port-Admiral, commanding at Chatham and Sheerness, and resided at Rochester. But Sir Michael was anxious to remove into the country; and as the command of the Northumberland no longer tied him to Rochester, he determined to put into effect his long-cherished intention of purchasing a country home. It was not necessary for him to reside in the Yacht, his presence on board her being only required when she was employed on some special service. His choice therefore was not limited to any particular neighbourhood. After seeing several places which were for sale, he fixed on Blendworth House, in Hampshire, of which in the course of the same year he became the possessor. It was situated sixty-two miles from London and ten from Portsmouth. His nephew, the Reverend C. G. Boyles, was at the time Curate of Blendworth Parish, in which he resided with his mother Mrs. Boyles: this circumstance had made him acquainted with the place, and also gave it an additional attraction to himself and Lady Seymour.

The close of the year 1819 was fully occupied by the business of settling in his new home; and in the care and improvement of it, together with the management of the land attached to it, he afterwards found a constant source

of interesting occupation. In the following year his family was again increased by the birth of his thirteenth and youngest child.

The Royal Yacht afforded him occasional employment of a character very agreeable, though very different from that in which he had been for so many years engaged, and which he would no doubt have cheerfully resumed had occasion offered. In the year 1820 he was ordered to convey the Crown Prince and Princess of Denmark from Antwerp to London. On this occasion he received from the Prince a very handsome gold snuff-box. In 1821 a more agreeable excursion awaited him: the Prince Regent Yacht was ordered to accompany the King to Ireland, conveying a portion of His Majesty's suite. In Dublin he had an opportunity of seeing many old friends and relations; and among the latter, he now saw, for the last time, his venerable mother, in her eighty-fifth year. During his stay in Dublin he was chosen an Honorary Member of the Royal Dublin Society. In the summer of 1822 he was engaged in another expedition of the same character, being ordered to accompany the King to Scotland; and in this likewise he found much that was interesting and agreeable. His return from Scotland was saddened by intelligence of the death of his aged mother, who expired on September 17, 1822, in her eighty-sixth year, in the house of her son, the Reverend John Seymour, in Tipperary.

In 1825, by the promotion to flag-rank of Captain the Hon. Sir Charles Paget, the command of His Majesty's yacht the Royal George became vacant, and Sir Michael

Seymour was selected for the appointment. As Portsmouth was the port at which this yacht lay, he was now more immediately in the vicinity of his sphere of duty; and the command of the Royal George was the more honourable and therefore the more welcome from the fact that she was the yacht on board which His Majesty embarked when he had occasion to make a passage by sea. The King's health, however, had unfortunately so much declined, that he was not able after this period to go afloat.

We may pass briefly over the years spent by Sir Michael in his home at Blendworth, his neighbours within reach were sufficiently numerous to form a pleasant society, and in the exchange of mutual hospitalities time was agreeably spent; he had good spirits with that turn for fun and humour which seems peculiarly proper to one born in Ireland; and though fond of society, he was still fonder of his home. He was always in the habit of reading much, and thus never lacked employment for his spare time.

Lady Seymour was devoted to her garden—as much so, that is, as was possible for one who was a most devoted wife and mother; she could point to some favourite plants which had accompanied her, like her children, in her change of homes; and her most welcome recreation was that which she found in her Conservatory and garden; and he also might be sometimes seen on the top of a ladder pruning a vine or restraining a vigorous creeper, to the wonder of his younger children, who marvelled that one who had but a single arm could attempt such work, and indeed, he sur-

prised many by what that one hand and arm could accomplish. He never received any assistance in dressing himself, could tie his neckcloth, and carved at dinner, merely having the help of a servant with a fork to steady the joint. He was fond of a game of whist, and always took his own turn at dealing, and in other ways he showed a remarkable independence. It was a matter of surprise to many how he was able to climb a ship's side in all weathers, without assistance by the use of a single side rope, and more than once sailors looking on have remarked that he must some day come to an untimely end. He used to say that God had given us many of our members in duplicate in order that if we lost one it might suffice to retain the other. Amongst his contemporaries of a similar character with himself was the late Admiral Sir James Gordon, and a friend has been known to express his amusement at hearing a humorous dispute between these two, as to which was the better off, he who had lost an arm or he who had lost a leg, each maintaining his own loss to be the lightest.

Moreover, another sister of Lady Seymour's, the widow of the late Admiral Edward Osborne, had settled in the neighbourhood; and in the year 1824 his brother-in-law, Sir William Knighton, bought an estate adjoining that of Blendworth, with a small house on it which he gradually enlarged into that now occupied by his son, the present Sir William Knighton.

Sir Michael found the vicinity of Portsmouth very desirable as enabling him to have frequent intercourse

with his many naval friends, and to keep himself conversant with all that was passing of a professional character.

Besides this, he and Lady Seymour had that interest and occupation attaching to the possession of a large family, thirteen in all, some of whom were entering on their careers in life, while others were as yet under instruction at school or at home. Hitherto his numerous family had all enjoyed excellent health, and no domestic calamity occurred to mar the happiness of himself and his wife until the summer of the year 1826, when their second son, James, then a Captain in H.M. 38th Regiment, and quartered at Cawnpore in India, died of fever, contracted there.

No one who has not experienced the shock of such an affliction, coming suddenly on parents and their children, and this for the first time, can well estimate the heaviness of such a grief. This son had been a great favourite at home, had been always very steady in his conduct, and was advancing rapidly in his profession; the intelligence, therefore, of his death was a very painful blow, but his father had a religious mind, and was ever actuated by a strong sense of duty; he therefore set himself to bear this trial with resignation to God's will, and to do his best to comfort others. Lady Seymour's health, however, was seriously affected by this heavy trial, and after a few weeks Sir Michael removed her and some of his family for change of air and repose to Salcombe on the coast of Devon.[1]

[1] It may not be out of place to insert here the following brief record of Sir Michael and Lady Seymour's family. We give it in the order of their birth:

Jane Ward, died unmarried, August 30, 1862.

John Hobart, now the present Sir John Hobart Culme Seymour, Rector

In January 1829, the Commissionership of Portsmouth Dockyard became vacant, by the death of the Honourable Sir George Grey, brother of the late Earl Grey. It was offered to Sir Michael Seymour, and after some hesitation accepted. It may be well to explain that this office was at that time of a very different nature to what it is now: the appointment was of a civil character, was made under

of Northchurch, Herts, Canon of Gloucester Cathedral, and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains. Married, first, Elizabeth Culme, of Tothill, near Plymouth, who died March 6, 1841; and secondly, Maria Louisa, daughter of Charles Smith, Esq., of Suttons, in the county of Essex.

James, entered the Army in H.M.'s 58th Regiment, got his company in H.M.'s 38th Regiment, and died of fever at Cawnpore, 1827.

Michael, the present Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, G.C.B., and Vice-Admiral of the United Kingdom, 1856–9 Commander-in-Chief in China, afterwards M.P. for Devonport, &c. Married Dora, daughter of Sir William Knighton, Bart., G.C.H., who died May 4, 1875.

Edward, entered the Royal Navy, attained the rank of Commander, and died June 13, 1837.

Richard, in holy orders, Rector of Kinwarton, which living he resigned after 42 years, was 22 years Proctor in Convocation for the Clergy of the Diocese of Worcester. 1846, Hon. Canon, and 1873, Canon of Worcester Cathedral. Married Frances, daughter of Charles Smith, Esq., of Suttons, in the county of Essex, who died April 27, 1871.

Frances Anne, married Spencer Smith, Esq., of Brooklands, in the county of Hants, son of Charles Smith, Esq., of Suttons, Essex.

Dorothea, married first, the Rev. William Chester, Rector of Elstead, Sussex, who died April 15, 1841, and secondly, Arthur Currie, Esq., late of 14 Connaught Place, who died Nov. 20, 1875.

Mary, married Captain Orlando G. Gunning Sutton, R.N., son of Sir George Gunning, Bart., of Horton, Northamptonshire, who died May 5, 1852.

Caroline, married Captain George Carr, Rifle Brigade, son of the late Dr. Carr, Bishop of Worcester, and died September 10, 1843.

Elizabeth, married Colonel Howard Vyse, of Stoke Place, Bucks, late Lieutenant-Colonel 2nd Life Guards.

Ellen, married the Rev. Henry Brooks Forster, Rector of Coln Rogers, Hon. Canon of Gloucester.

William, entered the Army as an Ensign in H.M.'s 72nd Highlanders, afterwards exchanged into H.M.'s 99th Regiment. Married and died in Australia, March 3, 1857.

Royal Patent, and was for life; the officer who accepted it being required to retire, and forego all claim to future active service in the Navy. It may therefore be imagined that to one who ardently loved his profession, a considerable sacrifice would be involved in the acceptance of such a position. On the other hand, it was a time of peace, with no prospect of war threatening the country, he had been twenty-eight years on the list of Captains, and was not yet close to his flag. He was getting on in life, having passed his sixtieth year. The position had the attraction of a remarkably good residence, and a liberal salary, which with his large family was a matter worthy of consideration. After, therefore, well weighing the matter, Sir Michael decided to accept the appointment, and on the 14th of January, 1829, he was gazetted to the Commissionership of Portsmouth Dockyard.

Although the duties on which Sir Michael Seymour now entered were not those of what is called active service, they could not but have in his eyes a great interest and importance, especially as Portsmouth, though only one of several dockyards, may be said to have been at that time the leading one, both as to building and fitting of ships. And as a port at which vessels were continually arriving from abroad, it possessed an ever-recurring variety of interests to one who had the Service at heart. There was also within the walls of the dockyard a feature of considerable interest at that time in the Naval College for the training of youths preparing for the rank of midshipmen.

The Commissioner in those days resided in what is now

the house of the Admiral Commander-in-chief, who then occupied the residence in High Street, Portsmouth, now the dwelling of the General commanding the Southern District. Sir Michael had thus a house amply sufficient for hospitality, the duties of which, as well as its pleasures, he and Lady Seymour heartily recognised and fulfilled.

There are those living who can testify that he entered on the work of his new office with that zeal and energy which had always been a part of his character, looking closely into the work of every department, sparing no pains to acquaint himself with every detail, and especially exhibiting the strictest care and justice in selecting the most deserving persons for promotion and for the offices to which they were best fitted.

Sir M. Seymour was at all times remarkable for his natural courtesy, and during his term of office it fell to his lot to receive a great variety of visitors to the dockyard, of all ranks, to whom he invariably paid such attention as was compatible with his duties and position.

In the summer of the year 1831, he and Lady Seymour had the honour of receiving our present gracious Sovereign, then Princess Victoria, together with H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent, and entertaining them at luncheon, after which he conveyed their Royal Highnesses in his barge over to Ryde, himself steering the boat. The Princess, then in her thirteenth year, showed a lively sympathy with Sir Michael in the loss of his arm, and expressed great surprise and interest at his ability to do so much with the remaining one.

When it is added, that he was still not far from his former Blendworth neighbourhood, and that Portsmouth with its heads and other officers of departments belonging both to Army and Navy, and officers of the garrison, and of the ships in port or fitting out, formed a large material for society; besides which, there was the Isle of Wight within easy reach, the yachting season in the summer, and the Commissioner's yacht and boat's crew occasionally at leisure, it will be seen that a residence in the dockyard afforded a pleasant home for Lady Seymour and his family, as well as a scene of useful occupation for the Commissioner.[1]

In the constant discharge of his duties as Commissioner of the dockyard, time passed away until the spring of 1832, when the Government, on the advice of the Admiralty, determined to make a great alteration in the mode of governing the dockyards; and it was resolved to change the office of Commissioner, which was an appointment for life, into that of an Admiral or Captain Superintendent over each dockyard, who should hold the office for five years, and still continue on the active list of the Navy. Sir Michael, who while permanent Commissioner of Ports-

[1] The following extract is made from Cunningham's 'Life of Sir David Wilkie,' in a letter to his sister Miss Wilkie. Sir William Knighton was a great lover of Art, and that eminent painter was at the time his guest. The letter is dated August 25, 1831.

'Sir William and the ladies are regretting your departure, the time passes here very pleasantly. We have been all day at Portsmouth, where Sir Michael Seymour showed us the dockyard, the block, and baking machinery, with the Victory man-of-war, with the spot on which Nelson fell, and the small cabin in the cockpit where he died. Sir Michael has a family of handsome daughters, who added much to the cheerfulness of our party.'

mouth Dockyard, had become entitled, by seniority, to the rank of Rear-admiral on the active list, was summoned to London early in June by Sir James Graham, then First Lord of the Admiralty, and informed of the change which the Government had determined on. Sir James expressed his regret that he should be put to any inconvenience, and assured him that he and his colleagues were anxious to show as far as possible the high esteem in which they held him, and he then offered him to continue to hold his present office for three years further, when he could retire, or to take his rank as Rear-admiral on the active list, and succeed Sir Thomas Baker, who was about to return from the command of the South American Station. At this offer all Sir Michael's old enthusiasm for the service was stirred up, and he at once accepted the South American command. On meeting one of his sons on the afternoon of the same day and telling him what had occurred, he added, 'I did not hesitate for a moment.'

On its transpiring that Sir Michael was about to vacate his office as Commissioner of Portsmouth Dockyard, great and general regret was expressed, both publicly and privately, not only within the dockyard, but also in Portsmouth and Portsea; his relations with the municipal authorities having been always of a most amicable kind. But more especially was this regret manifested within the dockyard; his administration had been marked by the strictest sense of justice, and his demeanour towards all ranks had been always so considerate and pleasant, that he had won in an unusual degree the affection, as well as the

respect, of all who were under his superintendence. It became known to him that there was a great desire to embody these feelings in the form of some testimonial; but upon learning this, he lost no time in making it known that, much as he valued their good-will towards him, which had led to such an intention, he felt it to be his duty at once and decidedly to decline it.

Later in the year he hoisted his flag in the Spartiate, which was to be his flag-ship. He desired to take with him his son Captain Michael Seymour as his flag-captain, but was prevented by some new Admiralty regulation, which prohibited an admiral taking his own son with him in that position. The Admiralty, however, expressed their intention of giving Captain Seymour a ship on the same station, and he was in the following year appointed to the command of the Challenger.

Sir Michael took with him Captain Robert Tait as his flag-captain, and his old shipmate Commander Edward Crouch as Secretary; and had his son Lieutenant Edward Seymour with him as his Flag Lieutenant.

The Spartiate was ready for sea in February, and though it was nineteen years since Sir Michael had been in command of a sea-going man-of-war, his letters and journal fully show that he had retained much of his former vigour and all his earlier zeal for his profession.

Writing from Torbay on February 13, he says, 'Here we are after a good trial of ships and men, and all safe and sound, tight ship, good masts, after four blowing days, and found Sir G. Cockburn in the Vernon. The ship

answers very well, and we all go on comfortably; I sail the first fine weather or change of wind for Plymouth.'

Plymouth was reached a few days later. His letters from that place and on the subsequent voyage out, all express the pain he felt in leaving England, and the deepest affection for those he had left behind. Writing to Lady Seymour, he says, 'I long for a few days' run in hopes of time and scene lightening my feelings, as I am away from the coast of England. Never was there, tell dear Michael, such a ship to stay as this in any sea, under any canvas. I should, tell him, have written to him, and dear —— and —— but I really do suffer when I write to any of my dearest children, but to you I'm not ashamed to own my excessive weakness.'

The Spartiate arrived in Rio on April 11, just as the cool weather was beginning, and the Admiral determined to live on board his ship, and not have a house on shore as his predecessor had.

He admired greatly the beautiful scenery of Rio and its neighbourhood, perhaps the finest in the world. In a letter he says, 'There is verdure to the very tops of the mountains, everything grows here; but Europeans lose their colour, get pale, thin, and relaxed. Edward has got quite stout; so have I, as when I left England. In the troubled state of this country, this ship is looked to as a resource for interference, and all are pleased at her being here. The weather is charming, but warm; all well on board.'

He speaks with the greatest pleasure of the arrival

of his son, Captain Michael Seymour, in December, in command of the Challenger; but Captain Seymour went on to the Pacific, after a very brief delay.

The whole time Sir Michael was in command at Rio he was continually worried and annoyed by the difficulties he had in dealing with the Slave Trade question. The Brazilian authorities professed every readiness to assist in the suppression of the traffic, and it is probable that many leading men in their government were ready honestly to carry out their engagements; but the influence of individuals interested in the profits of the importation of slaves rendered it most difficult to get any satisfaction out of the Brazilian Courts. The difficulties which he thus had to contend with kept him continually at Rio when he was most anxious to visit the rest of his station; and later on, when it became most important for his own health, and desirable also for the ship's company, that he should get to sea, he was again and again detained in harbour by the vexatious conduct of the Brazilian Courts.

His letters speak continually of these troubles. He says in one letter, 'I had reserved the day previous to the packet's sailing for writing to my dearest family, but on that evening I received information of the slaves from the vessel Smart detained being concealed in three houses in a district, of which the whole was searched for them by a magistrate except these three houses, and had the police been honest I should have had them. I had to see Mr. Fox (the Minister), Ouseley the Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice, and arranged all to go and

search, but the police delayed my boats two hours, and when we got to the place all were flown, and we since know that the slaves were removed farther into the country two hours before, and the people smiled and said, 'We expected you sooner.' Later he says, 'I am still busy with the slavers, one without any on board, under strong suspicion only; by Satellite the other with 423 slaves when caught, as there is a difficulty, her being under Portuguese colours, and only a mixed Brazilian commission Court is here, but the owners reside here, and agreeably to international law they are Brazilians. But they are here indolent, immoral, and venal in the extreme, and not generally disposed to put down this nefarious traffic. Though the Government assert they are sincere, yet 'tis feared the condemnation will not go on smoothly. I mean to give them ample trial; and as the Rapid has joined, hope to tickle them up, and bring plenty of cases for their decision.' In another letter, 'I have had infinite trouble and difficulty with the two slave cases brought in here; and the first, Snake's, a barque with 400 slaves, is obliged to go to Sierra Leone for condemnation, and probably the other without any, but under strong proof of having landed here her cargo of blacks, detained by the Satellite, will probably go there also, but three or four days will decide. I apprehend the expenses of refitting them and revictualling the negroes here and on their return voyage, will leave little for the captors.' He says, in a letter to the late Sir William Knighton, 'Everything goes on indolently, and justice is bartered and diverted by presents. Assassinations rarely happen, but

when they do, blow over without enquiry; however clear, decided measures are out of the question, and no examples are made. Parties are numerous; in the city only, one for Pedro but not strong, one for his son, the Emperor, and many generally for the Government, in whose favour the late elections count. They are, as a government, anxious to put down the slave trade, chiefly, I do believe, from the enormous proportion of blacks to whites, but individuals are most favourable to the further introduction of slaves.'

Sir Michael had found that the slave trade was really in active operation along the whole line of coast between Cape Frio and Isle Grande, and from the impunity with which vessels notoriously engaged in it entered into and departed from Rio de Janeiro, it was evident that the abominable traffic was fostered and encouraged, not only by the Brazilian merchants, but by the subordinate officers of the Government.

To evade the penalties which the introduction of African slaves in vessels under the Brazilian flag imposed on the parties concerned, daily instances occurred of their sudden transfer into Portuguese hands. Papers for this purpose were manufactured by a Portuguese consul, whose conduct, having been represented by the Admiral, caused him to be suspended from his functions by the Brazilian Government.

The anxious and humane mind of Sir Michael could not submit to such a state of things without making efforts to suppress it by such means as he had in his power. These were, however, very scanty, the whole disposable

force of men-of-war on the Brazilian coast consisting of five ships, including the flag-ship, yet he kept two of these constantly cruising; and the result was, in a short time, the detention of two slave ships, one by the Snake with 423 slaves on board, and the other by the Satellite close off the harbour of Rio, immediately after the slaves had been landed. But at this point, when the principal object seemed to have been accomplished by the capture of these vessels, it was a great mortification to discover that the real difficulties and annoyances were then only to begin. The delays and procrastination of the mixed courts before which these vessels were brought, conformably to the treaty between Great Britain and Brazil, whose sittings the Admiral daily attended, were such as to cause him great anxiety, and to occasion great exposure to the sun; while the ultimate fate also of the vessel detained by the Snake, of which a short narrative may not be irrelevant or uninteresting, greatly harassed his mind, and prevented him leaving the harbour even for a short time, and rendered him more susceptible to the bad influence of the climate.

The circumstances were as follows:[1]—

The Maria da Gloria, under Portuguese colours, was detained by the Snake on November 25, 1833, with 423 slaves on board, said to be bound for Monte Video, but standing for the neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro. On

[1] This statement is chiefly taken from a paper supplied by the late Captain Crouch, the Admiral's secretary.

arrival at Rio the case was brought before the mixed court of commission, and, in giving evidence, the master acknowledged it was his intention to land the slaves outside the harbour. The Maria da Gloria was built in Brazil, and her owner had been long resident in that country, and carried on business as a Brazilian merchant in the city of Rio de Janeiro. It was therefore urged by the Admiral on the part of the captor, that although the vessel was under Portuguese colours, and the slaves were the property of a man who called himself a Portuguese, yet, by the decision of Sir William Scott in the British Admiralty Court, the national character of a merchant is not to be taken from his place of birth, but from the place where he carries on his business; that it was evident that the object and spirit of the treaty with Brazil was to abolish the trade in slaves and prevent the equipment of vessels for the purposes of that traffic in other ports of Brazil; that under these principles the court ought to decide the case; that if it were allowed to Portuguese subjects to send their ships from Brazilian ports to traffic in slaves, the object and spirit of the treaty were infringed; that even on the hypothesis that the vessel was Portuguese property, still the introduction of slaves was strictly prohibited by the laws of Brazil, and therefore the court was bound to emancipate the slaves. The court, however, decided that the Maria da Gloria was the property of a Portuguese subject, and that they had not sufficient jurisdiction to proceed to the condemnation of the vessel or the emancipation of the slaves. Thus baffled,

the next step was full of anxiety; what was to become of the slaves, who were in a miserable condition, although much ameliorated by the care and attention of the officer in charge, Lieutenant Denman, of the Snake, and the medical officers of the Spartiate? After considerable hesitation at the idea of again subjecting these poor wretches to another long voyage, it was agreed between the British Minister and the Admiral that the most advisable course would be to send the Maria da Gloria to Sierra Leone, to be there brought before the British and Portuguese court of mixed commission as a Portuguese vessel. Being amply supplied with provisions and necessaries, the return voyage to the coast of Africa was commenced on January 4, 1834, the number of slaves being reduced to 390. The voyage across was not attended by any extraordinary circumstances; and on the arrival at Sierra Leone immediate steps were taken to bring the case before the proper tribunal. After hearing the proctors on both sides, the court pronounced the Maria da Gloria to belong as claimed by the owner conformably with the provisions of the treaty and convention between Great Britain and Portugal, and referred to the registrar to ascertain the amount of costs of suit and special damages which had arisen by her detention. The court also decided that the claimant was not entitled to demurrage, as the 8th article of the regulations for the mixed commission provides, that if the captain has been led into error by a voluntary and reprehensible fault on the part of the captain of the detained

ship, the claimant shall not have the right of receiving demurrage. The court being satisfied that the master of the said vessel, by carrying on the slave trade under circumstances that the 3rd and 4th sections of the 1st article of the convention declared to be illicit, and not being provided, according to the 4th article, with a royal passport to traffic in slaves, had led the captain into error, as contemplated by the before-recited provision of the said convention; and the court further decided that, according to the 9th article of the aforesaid regulations for mixed commissions, the said claimant was not entitled to any indemnification for the loss of slaves as the Maria da Gloria was not entitled to carry slaves, either by the aforesaid convention or the laws of Portugal.

To a mind unaccustomed to legal quibbles, the inference would be, on reading the sentence of the court, that the Maria da Gloria was not authorised to carry slaves either by the convention or by the laws of Portugal, and had infringed so many parts of the treaty that at least no blame could have rested on the captors; but this did not prove to be the case. The registrar's report was taken into consideration, the proctors again heard on both sides, and the court awarded that William Robertson, Esq., the commander of the Snake, should pay unto the claimant, for the use of the owner, the sum of 180*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.*, being the costs of suit, and such special damages and expenses as the registrar has stated the claimant is entitled to for the detention of the vessel, provided the British and Portuguese governments agree that the said sum ought to

be so paid according to the true intent and meaning of the treaty and convention between Great Britain and Portugal.

The Maria da Gloria, once more in charge of the Portuguese master, with 240 slaves, the miserable remnant of 423, left Sierra Leone, and again cleared for Monte Video on April 10, and on May 11 was once more found on the coast of Brazil, off Bahia, making signals to the shore, and on the 13th brought into that port with 230 slaves by Captain Broom, of the Imperial corvette Perija. The event was communicated to Sir Michael in a letter, dated May 28, from the captain of the Imperial frigate Bahama, of which the following is an extract:—'Presuming that the intelligence I have to communicate will be interesting to you, and desirous to aid in exposing what I am sure will in England be thought most culpable weakness in the authorities for the suppression of the slave trade, I take the liberty of addressing you, to inform you of the capture on the 13th inst. of the Portuguese barque Maria da Gloria from Sierra Leone, with 230 slaves on board, the same vessel you despatched some months ago from Rio de Janeiro, and with the same wretched creatures on board. She was discovered off Bahia making signals to the shore, and was brought in by Captain Broom, of the Perija. She had no boats, and only six seamen on board. The master reported that he had lost a boat and three seamen on the passage, and had the mainmast and mainyard sprung. The state of the poor slaves is shocking to humanity; ten had died during the passage, and ten more since her capture. She is in the

hands of the government here, of whom I am sure the president is desirous of condemning her; but since she escaped all your efforts at Rio, I fear she will be again liberated, and these unfortunate creatures be once more at the discretion of the wretches with whom they were originally found.'

This opinion was very shortly verified; the Maria da Gloria was released by the Brazilian authorities, and for the third time was in charge of Joachim Gerado Cordony, her master. The Captain-General of the Province of Bahia, in order that the slaves might not be landed within his jurisdiction, despatched a cruiser with the Maria da Gloria as far as the extreme limit of his authority, when being left, the master at length succeeded in landing about ninety slaves, the miserable remains of his original cargo of 423, in the neighbourhood of Cape Frio. The Maria da Gloria was shortly afterwards found at Monte Video.

On this extraordinary case coming before His Majesty's Government, in the several reports of the parties concerned, the view which the Admiral had taken of it was declared to be correct; and in a despatch from Lord Palmerston, His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, addressed to the British Commissioner at Rio de Janeiro, the following passages occur:—'This case has received the serious consideration of His Majesty's Government; and as the declaration of the mixed court, that it was not competent to take cognisance of the case, may be productive of great difficulty in the suppression of

the slave trade, I proceed to make to you the following observations.

'The Maria da Gloria, although navigated under the flag of Portugal, and with Portuguese papers, was fitted out at Rio de Janeiro, and there can be no doubt that she was to return to some port in Brazil.

'The owner, though possibly a Portuguese by birth, was resident at Rio de Janeiro, and carried on business as a merchant in that city.

'Now it is a principle of the law of nations, that the national character of a merchant is to be taken from the place of his residence and of his mercantile transactions and not from the place of his birth.

'In this transaction, therefore, the owner of the Maria da Gloria must be considered as a Brazilian subject, and as such bound by the laws of Brazil and the engagements into which that government has entered with other states; and His Majesty's Government are of opinion that the mixed commission at Rio de Janeiro had jurisdiction in this case, and might with propriety have admitted the usual proceedings to be instituted against the vessel and the slaves, with a view to the condemnation of the former and the emancipation of the latter.'

It would have been a considerable gratification to Sir Michael Seymour, after all the vexatious and anxious hours the case of this vessel had given him, to have received so full a corroboration of the correctness of his judgment; but it was ordered otherwise, and the despatch

did not reach South America until after his lamented death.

When the warm weather set in in the summer of 1833, Sir Michael seems to have felt it very much, and makes continual allusion in his letters to the effect it had on him. In January he says: 'I am grown horribly indolent, the enemy cannot be repulsed, and 'tis really very troublesome to be forced to assume a little of a commander-in-chief's dignity and appearance—a make-believe, as the boys call it—however necessary. But the heat of this and last month, 91° to 88° in the day time, tends to make me quite genteel. I expect to be very fashionably thin and unmanly to a great degree in time, as I am already fining down.'

In another letter, in January, he says: 'I have almost entirely left off wine, and never felt better, indeed, better than ever I was in the dockyard, which I would not have again for double the salary. I hope to settle down into a quiet old country gentleman by the year 1837.'

In March 1834 he writes in very good spirits, and speaks of himself as much better, the weather being cooler. In one letter to Lady Seymour he writes: 'I was in bed at six the night before last, and up at four and off to the mountains, and had a fagging day, but never was better. Got on board by ten. Take care of yourself, my dearest Jenny, for I look to meeting you in health as to the object of my labours, and bitter the cup would be without such a result.'

But though the cool weather was coming on it did not seem to restore his health; the trying climate of Rio, and the continual worry he had gone through about the slavers, had told heavily upon him. In the beginning of April he was attacked with low fever, from which he recovered sufficiently to go ashore to the house of Mr. Hesketh, the British Consul, where he was made as comfortable as possible, and where all that the attention of devoted friends, officers, doctors, and servants, alike could accomplish was done; but he could not again recover health and strength.

Writing in May he says: 'Since the 1st inst., when I was landed and brought to this delightful cottage, which is situated looking over the sea entrance and great part of the harbour, and has the finest air with the best panoramic view, I have been getting gradually better from a violent attack of head, fever and stomach, and hope in a few more days to get afloat again, though here, from my host's kindness, I have Crouch, with my steward, cook, &c., all lodged, and enjoy it much. I was out in a carriage yesterday, and returned many kind visits, and am quite another being to what I was a few days ago.' But later in the same letter, with evident misgivings as to his health, he expresses his wishes in regard to his wife and daughters in the event of any fatality, and afterwards adds: 'As people do not die a moment sooner for making a will, I have made one,' &c.

At the end of June the doctors recommended his going to sea in the hope that a change of air might be beneficial, though the climate of the hills round Rio at this time of year

is most beautiful; but he became worse before he could sail, and breathed his last on July 9, 1834, at Mr. Hesketh's house. The following letters of Captain Crouch and Captain Tait will best give an account of his closing hours, and of the esteem and love that all who were connected with him felt for him.

The following is the letter of Captain Crouch to Lady Seymour:—

'H.M.S. Spartiate, July 14, 1834.

'My dear Lady Seymour,—The return of your son will, I trust, afford you as much consolation as can be offered in this time of your bereavement and affliction; and though doubtless he will convey to you all the principal features of this most distressing event, yet perhaps some little detail from the hand of one who was happy and honoured in the friendship of your beloved partner, and who was constantly with him, may not be altogether unacceptable, or thought intrusive.

'At the beginning of April a low fever became very prevalent on board the Spartiate, and very few escaped an attack. Its character, however, was generally mild, and in no one instance did it prove fatal. Our lamented Admiral's was perhaps one of the severest cases, and it left him exceedingly weak and low. On May 1 he had sufficiently recovered to remove on shore for change, and for the next month I had great hopes of his health being re-established; but about the beginning of June, although his appetite was good, perhaps too good, I began

to perceive a gradual loss of flesh and occasional lowness of mind, notwithstanding the most unremitting attention on the part of the medical officers, and my own hopes, I confess, began to sink, although repeated rallies not only cheered him, but heightened the expectations of his professional attendants. Towards the end of the month the alteration was too palpable to admit of a doubt, and change was again advised; the ship was got ready for sea, but, alas! his complaint had been so insidious, and he altered so fast, as to render his removal impossible. He finally took to his bed on the 2nd instant, and although afterwards occasional gleams of hope cheered the minds of his friends, yet were they delusive, and he gradually sank without suffering much pain, except from occasional spasms, until at length, at half-past five on the morning of the 9th, he resigned "his spirit to Him who gave it," and by whose Divine aid, I sincerely pray, you may be enabled to submit to His unerring will, and to bear with fortitude His almighty dispensations.

'On all matters connected with future arrangements I have written to your eldest son, and it only remains for me to convey to you the regards and sympathy of Captain Tait, and to assure you, my dear Lady Seymour, that I shall ever remain, with most perfect respect,

'Your sincere friend,

'EDWARD CROUCH.'

Captain Tait gives the following account of the last days of Sir Michael in a letter to Sir William Knighton :—

'H.M.S. Spartiate, Rio de Janeiro, July 12, 1834.

'Dear Sir,—You will have heard by the two last packets of the illness of Sir Michael Seymour, though I fear you will be little prepared for the sad and painful intelligence it falls to me to communicate to you; that truly good and excellent man closed his brilliant and exemplary career on the morning of Wednesday, the 9th instant, at half-past five.

'For some weeks after he went to reside on shore he rallied a great deal, his strength improved, and his appetite was perhaps too good; but about the beginning of June neither Captain Crouch nor myself could conceal from ourselves that he was gradually, yet slowly, getting weaker, and losing flesh, and his spirits low at times and desponding, so unusual a thing with him, and this notwithstanding the fine weather, the thermometer never being higher than 71° in the shade, and sometimes 61°; and towards the end of that month he became so weak and low that on the 2nd instant he took to his bed, from which he never arose. Both Captain Crouch and myself had frequently urged him to go to sea, but he always said he could not go until after the Dahlia's arrival from the Pacific, though, from the fine climate here at this season, none of us were sanguine of his being benefited by the change; he seemed more like gradually wearing away, and to have passed over seven or eight years in the last ten months. From the 2nd instant, when he took to his bed, he gradually got weaker, notwithstanding the most unremitting attention from Dr. Bowen and Mr. McDermott, of this ship, who never

left the house, and two experienced medical practitioners of this place, till the sad and solemn hour of half-past five on the 9th instant, when as gallant a spirit as ever animated mortal form quitted its earthly mansion. He suffered occasionally from convulsions, but only occasionally, and at last he literally fell asleep as quiet and composed as a child, without one sigh or one struggle.

'When I consider the deep affliction into which Lady Seymour, his own family, and near and dear friends will be thrown by this inscrutable dispensation of Providence, I will not attempt to give vent to the feelings of sympathy and sorrow so keenly felt by Captain Crouch and myself on this occasion, but I may be permitted to say that in him I have lost a most kind friend, to whom I was most warmly attached and devoted, and who on every occasion has treated me like a son, and also one to whom I looked up as the pattern of an officer and a man.

'I hope it may be some consolation to Lady Seymour to see her son Edward, who was with his father during all the latter part of his illness. I have permitted him to return to England in the packet which sails to-morrow.

'My lamented Admiral was interred yesterday in the English cemetery near this city, with all the honours due to his rank. The procession from the Spartiate, formed by all the boats of his own squadron and those of the French, American, and Brazilian navies, was joined on landing, near the cemetery, by the Brazilian ministers, all the foreign ambassadors and diplomatic agents, and British

and foreign merchants; and so much was Sir Michael esteemed and respected, that even those who had not the honour of his acquaintance attended from respect to his memory, and all the foreign warehouses and shops in the city were closed.

'I remain, dear Sir,

'Your very faithful servant,

'ROBERT TAIT.

'P.S.—In justice I cannot close this without mentioning the unremitting, I might call it affectionate, attention of Sir Michael's servant Barber through the whole of his illness, and also, particularly latterly when he was required, of his steward Sugden, whom I could with difficulty force from his room that they might take the rest necessary to enable them to perform their duties.'

Little more remains to be said. The life and deeds of a man like Sir Michael Seymour require no panegyric; his career sufficiently shows what he was, a brave, energetic, and skilful officer, most ready and obedient as a subordinate, most firm and considerate in command.

It may not be out of place to mention here, that it used to be said by his contemporaries, that although, in that remarkable period of our naval history, there were amongst his brother officers many who were his equals in gallantry and in daring enterprise, there were few who could compare with him in practical seamanship, and that the only one they could name as probably his match in

this respect was the late Sir Richard Keates. His great successes in the Spitfire and in the Amethyst were no doubt owing to his power thus to turn to account his opportunities. One of his lieutenants used to take pleasure in telling how on one occasion when he had been compelled to put into Falmouth Harbour, and was being detained there at a critical moment, his pilot refusing to take the ship out against a foul wind, he said he would take upon himself the responsibilities of the pilot, and, taking charge of the ship, he took her safely out to sea.

The following piece of advice to a young officer no doubt illustrated his own practice. Having once asked the captain of a ship, which was under orders to sail, when he intended to get up his anchor, the captain replied that he was waiting for a fair wind, upon which Sir Michael said, 'Oh! is that all? Then I recommend you to get out to sea as fast as possible, and look for a fair wind there.'

Those who loved him so dearly as a husband, a father, and a friend, and so deeply mourned his loss, knew what he was as a private individual, and those who served with him in every ship, during a time when the discipline of the British navy was of the severest, and while some captains, happily but few, earned for themselves a bad name in the service by an undue severity in the exercise of their arbitrary power, could only too well testify how much beloved, as well as respected, he was by all who had been under his command.

In his family and his relations with his children his example was always such as to win their respect. He was

most regular in his observance of the ordinary duties of religion, in which he had been well instructed as a boy in his early home, and his maxims were of the purest and highest order. He was extremely attached to the Church of England, and he says in one of his letters: 'In spite of the times I think people's eyes are beginning to open to the efforts to decry the clergy and Church of England, and all its members will, I trust, exert themselves to support wise and moral establishments, without which we should return to barbarism.' And one of his sons well recollects his saying with great emphasis: 'People talk of morality, but there can be no real morality without religion.' And again the same son remembers accompanying him on board the Northumberland, when he had heard of a duel having been fought by two of the officers of the ship, in which one of them had been dangerously wounded, and the supposed aggressor, who had escaped unhurt, was under arrest. On reaching his cabin he called a midshipman, and said to him, 'Take this Bible (giving him one) to Mr. ——.'

The following extract from a letter written to one of his sons who was about to visit Italy in charge of two younger companions, is a specimen of his solicitude for his children, and of the spirit in which he exercised it:—'Most anxiously must I guard and warn you against the seducing climate of Italy, and the insidious demeanour of its natives, which has ruined many of the fairest prospects, and destroyed their peace and happiness for ever. You will, I trust, most cautiously guard yourself and your compa-

nions from contagion of immoral influence under whatever aspect it approaches, for it is necessary under that sky to mistrust, the more agreeable it appears. The easiest way to be virtuous is to be entirely so, and you are deeply bound to preserve those with you from taint, and be firm in example and reality, as your own conscience and future tranquillity are at stake. I hope and trust you may never give cause to anyone here to blush at the recollection of your trip to Italy; but you cannot be too guarded.'

His grave is in the British cemetery at Rio de Janeiro, on the shores of the sea, and looking on the most beautiful harbour in the world, where he closed his life in the service of his country.

The monument over his grave bears the following inscription:—

BENEATH THIS STONE

ARE INTERRED THE MORTAL REMAINS OF

SIR MICHAEL SEYMOUR,

BART., K.C.B. AND REAR-ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE SQUADRON OF H.B.M. FLEET,

Who in the sixty-sixth year of his age closed his brilliant and exemplary career at Rio de Janeiro, when in command of the British Forces on the South American station. He was born at Pallas in the county of Limerick, Ireland, November 8, 1768.

That he was a brave officer, and faithfully served his king and country, is amply testified by those heroic exploits for which his honours were bestowed, and which are recorded in the Naval Annals of the glory and greatness of England. What he was as a husband and a father, as a master and a friend, is known only to those who lived with him in his own house, and now lament him in a distant land. By them this tablet is inscribed to his beloved memory, in testimony both of the affection they bore him, and of the consolation they find in the hope of being reunited, at the resurrection of the just, with him who lived and died in the fear of God and in the faith of Jesus Christ.

There was also erected in the Dockyard Chapel at Portsmouth, on the return of the Spartiate to England, and at the cost of her officers and ship's company, a marble tablet with the following inscription :—

SACRED

TO THE MEMORY OF

SIR MICHAEL SEYMOUR,

BARONET, KNIGHT COMMANDER OF THE MOST HONOURABLE MILITARY ORDER OF THE BATH, AND A REAR-ADMIRAL IN THE BLUE SQUADRON OF HIS MAJESTY'S FLEET,

Who in the 66th year of his age closed his brilliant and exemplary career at Rio de Janeiro on the 9th day of July 1834, when in command of his Majesty's Naval forces on the South American Station.

This most distinguished officer and amiable man, whose heroic exploits are recorded in the annals of his country, lost an arm when serving as lieutenant on board the Marlborough in the memorable action of the 1st of June 1794 ; and whilst in command of the Amethyst frigate, of 36 guns, captured, after two well-contested and sanguinary actions, the French frigates Thétis and Niemen, of 46 guns each, for which he received a medal and was created a baronet ; he successively commanded the Hannibal (in which ship he captured the French frigate Sultane), the Northumberland, and two of the royal yachts, and was Commissioner of the Naval Dockyard at Portsmouth until appointed to the South American command.

As an humble but sincere testimony of their unfeigned respect for him as a man, and their profound admiration of him as an officer, this tablet is erected by the Captain, Officers, Seamen, and Royal Marines of his flagship, the

SPARTIATE.

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